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Marie Antoinette and Mirabeau.

THE ROMANCES OF

ALEXANDRE DUMAS

ANDRÉE DE TAVERNAY

Being Part of

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CHAPTER XXVII.

THE COURT OF THE CHÂTELET.

In order that they may comprehend the import of Mirabeau's triumph, — which involved in its rebound the triumph of royalty, of which he constituted himself the representative, — it is necessary to tell our readers what the Court of the Châtelet was.

Moreover, one of its decisions furnished material for one of the most dreadful scenes which ever stained the Place de Grève, during the year 1790, — a scene which will necessarily find its place in the course of this narrative, as it is by no means foreign to our subject.

Since the Thirteenth Century the Châtelet had been of great historic importance, both as a courthouse and a prison, having received from good King Louis the Ninth the universal jurisdiction which it exercised during five centuries.

Another King, who was nothing unless a builder, Philip Augustus, erected a considerable part of the Church of Notre-Dame. He also founded three hospitals, Trinity, Sainte Catherine, and Saint Nicolas du Louvre. He paved the streets of Paris, which was so buried in mud and filth, — so say the chronicles of the time, — that the odors made it impossible for the inhabitants to sit in their windows.

Philip Augustus had one great resource for all his expenses, — a resource which his successors unfortunately lost, — the Jews.

In 1189 he was inoculated with the chief folly of his age, — the desire to recapture Jerusalem from the Sultans of Asia; so he accompanied Richard the Lion-Hearted, of England, to the Holy Land.

Before he went away, not wishing that his loyal citizens of Paris should lose their time, and possibly, in their leisure moments, dream of rebellion against himself, — as, at Philip's own instigation, the subjects, and even the son of Henry Second of England had rebelled, — Philip left a plan which he ordered to be put into execution immediately after his departure.

This plan was to build a new wall about the city, an enclosure of which he himself drew the plan, and which was to be composed of solid masonry, a genuine wall of the Twelfth Century, garnished with towers and gates. This was the third wall surrounding Paris.

As one may easily understand, the engineers in charge of the undertaking did not know precisely how to gauge the size of their capital, which had grown very rapidly since the days of Hugh Capet, and was in a fair way to break through a third wall, as it had overrun the two predecessors.

The encircling wall was therefore built with a large margin; and within its circumference, as a precaution against the future, was a crowd of little hamlets, destined some day to become portions of the grand whole. These villages, poor as they were, had each its Seigneurial (or Lord) Justice. These noble judges, or seigneurs, contradicted each other on most points. Being included within one province, this opposition was the more noticeable; and they ended off by jostling against each other so emphatically, that their decisions led to dire confusion in this mixed capital.

There was a certain Seigneur de Vinaumus. Having

as it seemed to him, greater grievances on the score of this confusion than anybody else, he resolved to make an end of it. This Seigneur was Louis the Ninth, also King of France.

It may be well to inform little children, and even grown folks, that when Louis Ninth administered justice, under the famous oak-tree which has since become proverbial, he did so as a Seigneur, or Lord, and not as King. He therefore ordained, as King, that all the cases tried before the petty Lords Judiciary of the hamlets might be appealed to his own court, the Châtelet, in Paris. The jurisdiction of the Châtelet (or *Little Castle*) therefore became all powerful, being made a Court of Final Appeal, or Last Resort.

The Court of Châtelet therefore remained the supreme court, up to the very time when the Parliaments (encroaching, in their turn, on the royal prerogatives) declared that they would themselves consider any appeals from the decisions of the Judges of the Châtelet Court.

Now the Assembly had just suspended the Parliaments. "We buried them very speedily," said Lameth, as he left the hall after the session. In place of Parliaments, the Assembly, under the insistence of Mirabeau, restored to the Châtelet Court its ancient authority, augmented by new powers.

It was a great victory for royalty, that crimes against the nation, appealable under martial law, should come before a Crown Tribunal.

The first crime whereof the Châtelet had to take cognizance, after this change, was one which we are about to describe.

On the very day when this new law was promulgated, two of the murderers of the unfortunate François were hanged in the Place de Grève with no process of trial

except a public accusation and the general notoriety of the offence.

A third, who was none other than that blockhead Fleur d'Épine, to whom we before referred, was regularly tried. Degraded from his military office, and condemned by the Châtelet Court, he travelled by the same route as themselves, to rejoin his companions in eternity.

Two cases remained to be heard: that of the Farmer General Augeard, and that of the Inspector General of the Swiss Guards, Pierre Victor de Besenval. These two men were devoted to the Crown, and so their friends hastened to carry their cause before the higher Châtelet Judges.

Augeard was accused of having furnished the funds paid by the Queen's agent to the troops assembled on the parade-ground Champ de Mars, in July. Being little known, his arrest made little noise, and the populace cared nothing about it. The Châtelet acquitted him, without occasioning much talk.

The last case was Besenval's. This was quite another affair, for his name was notorious, in the worst sense of that term.

It was he who commanded the Swiss mercenaries at Réveillon, at the Bastille, and on the Champ de Mars. The populace remembered that he had led the assault against them on these three occasions, and were not slow to seek their revenge.

The orders of the Crown to the Châtelet Judges were most precise. Under no pretext would the King or Queen allow Besenval to be condemned; and it required no less than this double protection to save him.

Knowing himself to be culpable, he fled after the fall of the Bastille. Arrested on his way to the frontier, he was brought back to Paris. When he entered the Court-

room, death-shouts greeted him on all sides. "Besenval to the lamp-post! Besenval to the gibbet!" were cries heard from every quarter.

"Silence!" bawled the officials. With great effort silence was obtained. One of the onlookers profited by this stillness to call out, in a magnificent bass voice: "I demand that he be cut into thirteen pieces, and that one be sent to each section."

In spite of the charges against him, in spite of the animosity of the audience, Besenval was acquitted.

Indignant at this double acquittal, of both Augeard and Besenval, one of the auditors scribbled these four lines on a scrap of paper, which he rolled up like a ball, and sent to the Presiding Judge.

Sham judges, you — who Augeard cleared,
And Besenval whitewash — would fain cleanse a pest;
Like cheap waste-paper, soft, besmeared,
You soak up foul blots, but on you the blots rest.

The quatrain was signed. This was not all. The Presiding Judge looked about for the author. The author was standing on a bench, soliciting, by his gestures, the Judge's attention; but the countenance of the Judge fell, and he did not dare order the man's arrest; for that author was Camille Desmoulins, the agitator from the Palais Royal, the hero of platform and pistol, the disseminator of savage pamphlets, the Lamp-post Advocate, as he was called.

One of the spectators who passed out in the crowd, and whose costume would cause him to be taken for a simple tradesman, spoke to one of his neighbors, at the same time laying his hand on the man's shoulder, although the latter apparently belonged to the superior class of

society. "Well, Doctor Gilbert, what do you think of those two acquittals?"

The man thus addressed started, looked at his interlocutor, recognizing the face as he had the voice, and answered: "It is *to* you and not *from* you this question should come, my master, — you who know all things, past, present, and future."

"I? Why, I think that when two such scamps are acquitted, it is time to say, 'Woe to the innocent man who will come next!'"

"And why do you think an innocent man will succeed them, and be punished?" asked Gilbert.

"For the simple reason," replied his interlocutor, with the irony natural to him, "that it is the way of the world to let the good suffer for the bad."

"Adieu, master!" said Gilbert, offering a hand to Cagliostro; for after such words he no longer doubted in the least the identity of the terrible skeptic.

"And why adieu?"

"Because I have business," replied Gilbert, smiling.

"A rendezvous?"

"Yes!"

"With whom, — Mirabeau, Lafayette, or the Queen?"

Gilbert paused and looked at Cagliostro uneasily.

"Do you know you terrify me?" said Gilbert.

"On the contrary, I ought to reassure you," said Cagliostro.

"How so?"

"Am I not one of your friends?"

"I hope so."

"You may be sure of it, and if you want a proof — "

"What then?"

"Come with me, and I will give you, in regard to the negotiation which you believe so secret, certain other

details, kept so very private, that you, who fancy yourself to be managing this special affair, are really kept in ignorance of half its ins and outs."

"Hear!" said Gilbert. "Perhaps you think to make game of me, with the aid of some of those old enchantments which are your familiars; but never mind! The circumstances of the time are so grave that I would accept any light, though offered by Satan in person. I will go wherever you may wish to take me."

"Oh, be easy! It will not be far away, and is moreover in a place not unknown to you. Only you must let me call the first empty cab that passes. The dress in which I came out did not make it advisable to take my own team."

He made a sign to a cab which was going by on the other side of the quay. The cab drove up and the two entered it.

"Where shall we go, my friend?" asked the coachman of Cagliostro, as if he comprehended that the passenger he questioned, though more simply clad, really led the other wherever he pleased.

"Oh, thou knowest," said Balsamo, making a sort of Masonic sign to the driver, who looked at him in great astonishment.

"Pardon, Monseigneur!" he said, answering with another sign, "but I did not know you."

"It is not so with me," said Cagliostro, in a firm and haughty voice. "However numerous they may be, I know every one of my subjects, from the least to the greatest."

The coachman shut the door, mounted his seat, put his horses into a grand gallop, and drove through the labyrinth of streets which led from the Châtelet to the Boulevard called Daughters of Calvary, whence he

continued his course towards the Bastille, and drew up at the corner of the Rue Saint Claude.

When the cab stopped the door was opened with a celerity which testified the driver's respectful zeal.

Cagliostro made a sign for Gilbert to step out first, and then came out himself, saying as he did so: "Hast thou nothing to say to me?"

"Yes, Monseigneur, and I should have made my report this evening, but for the good luck of meeting you now."

"Speak out!"

"What I have to say to Monseigneur must not be heard by ears profane."

"Oh," said Cagliostro, laughing, "he who listens is hardly one of the profane."

This referred to Gilbert, who discreetly moved farther away, though not so far that he could not still see with one eye and hear with one ear.

He could see a smile play over Balsamo's face at the driver's report. He could hear the two names of Provence and Favras.

When the report was finished Cagliostro drew a double louis from his pocket, and wished to give it to the coachman; but the latter shook his head. "Monseigneur knows very well," he said, "that we are forbidden, by the supreme edict, to take pay for our reports."

"Oh well, it is not for thy report I pay, but for our drive."

"With that understanding, I accept," said coachy, taking the goldpiece. "Thanks to you, Monseigneur, my day's work is over." Mounting to his seat he drove away on the trot, cracking his whip, and leaving Gilbert dumfounded by what he had just seen and heard.

"Well!" said Cagliostro, who held his door open for

several seconds before Gilbert thought of going inside, "won't you come in, my dear Doctor?"

"Certainly!" said Gilbert. "Pray excuse me;" and then he crossed the threshold, though so stunned that he almost reeled like a man intoxicated.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AGAIN THE HOUSE IN THE RUE SAINT CLAUDE.

We know what self-control Gilbert possessed. By the time he had crossed the large and solitary courtyard he was himself again; so that he ascended the outer staircase with a stride as firm as his step across the threshold had been vacillating.

The mansion he had already recognized as being the same he had once visited, at that epoch in his career which had left ineffaceable traces in his heart.

In the antechamber he encountered the same German servant he had seen there sixteen years before. He stood on the same spot and was clad in the same livery; only, like Gilbert, like the Count, like the antechamber itself, this lackey was older by sixteen years.

Fritz — he remembered this as the name of this worthy domestic — Fritz knew at a glance whither his master wished to conduct Gilbert. Opening rapidly two intervening doors he paused on the threshold of the third, till he was assured that Cagliostro had no other commands.

This third door opened into the salon. Cagliostro, with his hand, made a sign for Gilbert to enter, and with his head, a sign that Fritz might retire, adding in German: "I am at home to nobody, until further orders."

Then turning to Gilbert he said: "It was not to prevent you from understanding that I spoke to my servant in German, for I know you speak that language, but because Fritz, who is a Tyrolese, understands German much

better than French. — But sit down, Doctor; I am at your service."

Gilbert could not help glancing inquisitively about him, and for a few seconds his eyes rested successively on the pictures and different pieces of furniture ornamenting the room, every one of which he recalled to memory.

The salon was the same as aforetime. On the walls hung eight pictures by the Old Masters. The armchairs were still upholstered in cherry brocade, broidered with gold, whose flowers shone out in relief amid the shadows cast by the thick curtains. The great inlaid table was in its old place; and the smaller tables, weighted with Sèvres porcelain, stood between the windows.

Gilbert sighed, and let his head fall on his hand. Memories of the past superseded the feeling of curiosity which at first possessed him.

Cagliostro looked at Gilbert, as Mephistopheles might have looked at Faust, when that German philosopher had the imprudence to allow himself to indulge in such dreams in the diabolical presence. Suddenly he exclaimed, in a strident voice: "It appears that you recognize this room, Doctor?"

"Yes; and it recalls my obligations to you."

"Ah, bah! Chimeras!"

"You are indeed an odd man," said Gilbert, speaking to himself rather than to Cagliostro; "and if overruling Reason encouraged human faith in the magical prodigies reported to us by the poets and chroniclers of the Middle Ages, I should be tempted to believe you a necromancer, like Merlin, or an alchemist, like Nicholas Flamel."

"Yes, Gilbert, I am such a man to the world, but not to you. I have never sought to dazzle you with mira-

cles; and if perchance you have seen, at my summons, Truth emerge from her well, a little more ornamented and a little less naked than is her custom, it is because I have a taste for frippery, true Sicilian as I am."

"It was here, Count, as you will remember, that you gave a hundred thousand crowns to a very unhappy fellow in rags, as readily as I should give a sou to a pauper."

"You forget something still more extraordinary, Gilbert," said Cagliostro gravely, — "that the ragged boy brought back the whole of the one hundred thousand crowns, less only two louis, which he had used to buy clothing with."

"The fellow was only honest, whereas you had been magnificent!"

"And who says, Gilbert, that it is not easier to be generous than honest, — and to give away a hundred thousand ready crowns to somebody, when one has millions, than to carry back the one hundred thousand crowns to the lender, especially when the borrower has n't a sou."

"Perhaps so!"

"Besides, all depends upon one's mental disposition at the moment. I had just then experienced the greatest unhappiness of my lifetime, Gilbert. I no longer held to anything; and if you had asked for my life, I believe I should have given it to you — God pardon me! — at readily as I gave you that hundred thousand crowns."

"Then you have been submitted to torture, like other men?" said Gilbert, regarding Cagliostro with some astonishment.

Cagliostro sighed. "You talk of the memories recalled to your mind by this salon. If I should talk of what the room recalls to me, — but no! Before the recital was

ended, the rest of my hair would be white. — Let us chat about something else. Let us leave former events to sleep quietly in their shroud of oblivion, in their tomb of the past. Let us talk of the present. Let us talk of the future, if you will."

"You bring me back to present realities. Just now you said that, so far as I was concerned, you had broken with charlatanism; and behold now you pronounce that sounding word *future*, as if the future were in your hands, — as if your eyes could decipher its unknown hieroglyphics."

"Ah, you forget! Having at my disposal more means than other men, it is not surprising that I see the way better and farther than others do."

"Always words, Count!"

"You are oblivious to the facts, Doctor!"

"What do you expect, when my reason refuses to believe?"

"You remember that philosopher who denied all motion?"

"Yes."

"What did his adversary do?"

"He walked about in his opponent's presence," said Gilbert. — "Very well! I see your point. March, and I will look on; or rather, Speak, for thy servant heareth."

"Certainly, that is why we are here; and we have already wasted too much time on other matters. Let us see, Doctor, how far have we got along with our *fusion cabinet?*"

"What, — our *fusion cabinet?*"

"Certainly, our Lafayette-Mirabeau ministry."

"There are some groundless rumors which you have heard from others, and you seek to ascertain their reality by interrogating me," replied Gilbert.

"Doctor, you are scepticism incarnate; and what is worse, you doubt, not because you *can't* believe, but because you *won't* believe. Well, must I first tell you some things which you know as well as I? So be it! Afterwards I will tell you some things which I know better than yourself."

"I am listening!"

"A fortnight ago you talked with the King about Mirabeau, as the one man who could save the monarchy. Perhaps you remember, as you went away from the King, that Monsieur de Favras was admitted?"

"Which proves that he was not hanged at that date," said Gilbert, smiling.

"Oh, you 're in too much of a hurry, Doctor. I did n't know you were so cruel. Do give the poor devil a few days longer. I made that prediction on the Sixth of October. It is now the Seventh of November, only a month. You hardly vouchsafe his soul as long a time to flit from the body, as is always accorded to a tenant who is to vacate his lodgings, — the quarter's notice. — But I warn you, Doctor, that you are leading me off the track."

"Resume it, Count. I ask nothing better than to follow your lead."

"Very well, — you spoke to the King about Mirabeau, as the only man to rescue the monarchy."

"That is my opinion, and that is why I suggested this combination to the King."

"It is also my opinion, Doctor. That 's why your combination will be wrecked."

"Wrecked?"

"Undoubtedly. You know well enough that I don't wish to see monarchies saved."

"Go on!"

"The King, somewhat unsettled by what you said to him — Excuse me, but I am obliged to take up the thread from the outset, to convince you that I am not ignorant of a single phase of your negotiation! — Very well, the King, moved by what you said to him, talked over your combination with the Queen. It will be a great amazement to superficial minds, — when that great gossip, History, shouts on the housetops what we now whisper in the ear, — to know that the Queen was less averse to your project than the King. She sent for you to inquire about it. She discussed with you the *pros* and *cons*, and finally authorized you to talk with Mirabeau. Is n't this correct, Doctor?" said Cagliostro, looking Gilbert squarely in the face.

"So far I acknowledge that you have not deviated from the correct road."

"Upon this success you came away enchanted, Monsieur Proudfellow, with the profound conviction that this royal conversion was due to your irrefragable logic and irresistible arguments."

At this ironical speech Gilbert could not avoid biting his lips.

"And to what was this conversion due, if not to my logical arguments? Tell me, Count! for the study of the human heart is more precious to me than the study of the human body. You have discovered an instrument wherewith you may read the bosoms of kings. Lend me that marvellous telescope! Only an enemy of humanity would keep it solely to himself."

"I have already told you, that from yourself I have no secrets, Doctor. According to your wish I will place the telescope in your own hands. You may look through it as you will, by the small end, which makes things look larger, or by the large end, which makes them

look smaller. The Queen yielded for two reasons. Firstly, she had been subjected to a great sorrow the evening before; and to give her an intrigue, to tie and untie, was to furnish her with a distraction. Secondly, the Queen has always heard Mirabeau referred to as a lion, as a tiger, a bear; and what woman is able to resist such a flattering tribute to her self-love, as to tame a bear, tiger, or lion? 'It will be curious,' so she said to herself, 'if I can bend to my feet this man who hates me, — if I can lead him to make me public apologies, in the very tribune where he insulted me. I shall see him at my knees. That will be my revenge! If this genuflexion results in some good to France and royalty, so much the better.' But this last consideration was entirely secondary with the Queen, you understand."

"You pelt me with hypotheses, Count, when you promised to convince me by facts."

"You refuse my telescope? Well, let 's talk no more about that, but return to material things, — to such facts as may be seen with the naked eye, — Mirabeau's debts, for example. Ah, there you have something which needs no telescope!"

"Very well, Count; then here 's another chance for you to display your generosity."

"By paying Mirabeau's debts?"

"Why not? You once paid the debts of Cardinal Rohan."

"Don't guy me on account of that speculation, for it was one which best succeeded."

"And how did it repay you?"

"In that affair of the necklace, — a very pretty affair, it seemed to me. For such a price I would even pay Mirabeau's debts; but just at present, as you know very well, it is not I on whom he must rely. He must

count upon the future Generalissimo, Lafayette, who will make him leap for fifty thousand miserable francs, like a dog after macaroons, and will end by not giving them to him."

"Oh, Count!"

"Poor Mirabeau, indeed, when all the fools and coxcombs with whom thou art connected make thy genius pay for the follies of youth. True, all this is providential, for God must use human means. *The immoral Mirabeau!* says Provence, who is himself impotent. *Mirabeau the prodigal!* says Artois, whose brother has thrice paid his debts. Poor man of genius! Yes, thou wilt perhaps save the monarchy, but the monarchy ought not to be saved. Mirabeau is *a monstrous babbler*, says Rivarol; *a beggar*, says Mably; *a spendthrift*, says La Poule; *a scallawag*, says Guillermy; *an assassin*, says the Abbé Maury; *a dead man*, says Target; *dead and buried*, says Duport; *an orator more hissed than applauded*, says Pelletier; *small-pox in his very bones*, says Champcenetz; *fit for the galleys*, says Lambesc; *deserves hanging*, says Marat. If Mirabeau should die to-morrow the people would give him an apotheosis, glorify him after death. All the dwarfs whom he surpassed in stature, and on whom he trod so heavily while he lived, would follow his hearse, crying: 'Woe to France, who hath lost her Tribune! Woe to royalty, which has lost its staff.'"

"Do you mean to predict the death of Mirabeau?" cried Gilbert, almost frightened.

"Frankly, Doctor, can you expect long life for a man whose blood scorches him, whose heart stifles him, whose genius devours him? Do you not see that power so gigantic as his cannot contend eternally against the current of mediocrity? The labor essential to such an undertaking is like the uphill journey of Sisyphus with his

rock. For two years past has Mirabeau been beaten backward by this word *Immorality.* Each time, after unparalleled efforts, when he believed he had pushed his stone to the very summit of the mountain, this word tumbled on him again, harder than ever. When the King had almost adopted the advice of the Queen, as to the advisability of creating Mirabeau Prime Minister, somebody came to the King to say: 'Sire, Paris is shocked at Mirabeau's immorality; France is shocked at his immorality; Europe is shocked at his immorality;' as if God casts great men in the same mould as common mortals; as if, in its enlargement, the circle which embraces the great virtues must not include great vices also. Gilbert, you, and two or three other intelligent men, are exerting yourselves to make Mirabeau Prime Minister, — to make him what that ninny Turgot has been, and that pedant Necker, that fop Calonne, and that atheist Brienne; but Mirabeau will not be minister, because he has one hundred thousand francs' worth of debt, — which would be readily paid, if he were only the son of a plain Farmer General, — and because he was once condemned to death for having carried off the wife of an old imbecile, who finally killed herself with charcoal for the sake of a handsome captain. What a tragedy, what a comedy, is human life! How I should weep over it, if I had not chosen the rôle of laughter."

"What prediction do you make for him?" asked Gilbert, who fully approved the flight of Cagliostro's wit into the region of the imagination, but was somewhat disconcerted by the conclusion finally reached.

"I tell you," repeated Cagliostro, in the tone of a prophet, who is not his own master and will permit no reply, "I tell you that Mirabeau the Genius, Mirabeau the Statesman, Mirabeau the Grand Orator, will exhaust

his life and conquer the tomb, without becoming what, of all the world, he should be, Minister. Ah, my dear Gilbert, mediocrity is, after all, a fine shelter."

"Then the King opposes him?"

"Peste! The King is careful. He must discuss the matter with the Queen, to whom he *almost* gave his word. You know the King's political science lies in that word *almost*. He is *almost* persuaded (like a certain king in the Scriptures) to be a Constitutionalist, a philosopher. He is *almost popular;* and he is *almost done for*, when he counsels with Monsieur de Provence. Go to the Assembly to-morrow, Doctor, and you shall see what you shall see."

"Can't you tell me in advance?"

"That would deprive you of the pleasure of a surprise."

"To-morrow is rather far off!"

"Then do better! It is five o'clock. In an hour the Jacobin Club will be open. These Jacobin gentlemen are night-birds, you know! Do you belong to the society?"

"No. Camille Desmoulins and Danton have persuaded me to join the Cordeliers."

"No matter! As I say, the Jacobin Club will be open in an hour. Be tranquil; it is a society so well made up that you will not be out of place. — We will dine together. After dinner we will take a cab and drive to the Rue Saint Honoré; and when you come out of the old convent you will have been edified. Besides, having a dozen hours' notice, you may be able to parry the catastrophe, perhaps."

"How! You dine at five?"

"At five precisely. I keep ahead in all things. In ten years from now France will have only two daily

meals, — breakfast at ten in the forenoon, and dinner at six in the evening."

"And what will lead to this change of custom?"

"Famine, my dear!"

"You are indeed a prophet of evil!"

"Not always, for I now predict a good dinner."

"Have you guests?"

"I am absolutely alone; but you know the saying of the ancient epicure, *Lucullus* dines with Lucullus."

"Monseigneur is served," said a lackey, opening the two leaves of a door into a dining-room, splendidly lighted and sumptuously garnished.

"Come, Monsieur Pythagorean," said Cagliostro, taking Gilbert's arm. "Bah, once does not establish a custom."

Gilbert followed the enchanter, subjugated by his magic words, and perhaps also with the hope of starting some lightning in the conversation, which would guide him in the political night wherein he was walking.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE JACOBIN CLUB.

Two hours after the conversation just recorded, a carriage, without footmen or armorial bearings, stopped in front of the steps of the Church of Saint Roch, whose façade had not then been mutilated by the long-barrelled Biscayen muskets, used on the Thirteenth Vendémiaire, in the Revolution.

From this carriage emerged two men dressed in black, like members of the commonalty at that time. Guided by the yellow glimmer of the street lamps, which here and there pierced the fog in the Rue Saint Honoré, and following the drift of the crowd, they walked along the right side of the street, as far as the small door of the Convent of the Jacobins.

If our readers have guessed, as is probable, that these two men were Doctor Gilbert and Cagliostro, or the Banker Zannone, as the latter at this time called himself, it is needless to explain why they stopped in front of this little doorway, inasmuch as that little doorway was the end of their excursion.

Moreover, as we have said, the two new-comers had only to follow the crowd, for the crowd was great.

"Will you go into the nave, the main part of the chapel, or will you content yourself with a seat in the gallery?" asked Cagliostro of Gilbert.

"I believe," replied Gilbert, "that the nave is reserved for members of the society."

"Undoubtedly; but I belong to all sorts of societies," said Cagliostro, laughing, "and where I am, there my friends may be also. Here is a card for you, if you want it. As for me, I have only to give the word."

"We shall be recognized as outsiders," observed Gilbert, "and told to get out."

"It is necessary to tell you one thing, which it seems you do not know, — that the Jacobin Society, founded only three months ago, numbers already nearly sixty thousand members in France, and will count four hundred thousand before the year is over. Besides, my very dear fellow," he added, smiling, "this is the genuine Grand Orient of Free Masonry, — the centre of all kinds of secret societies, — rather than at that imbecile Fauchet's, as the world fancies; so if you have no right to enter here as a Jacobin, you have your place here in your capacity as a Mason of the Rosy Cross degree."

"Never mind," said Gilbert, "I like the gallery best. From that height we can overlook the whole assembly; and if there are any present or future notabilities, with whom I am not acquainted, you can make them known to me."

"To the galleries then!" said Cagliostro, and he led the way up a wooden staircase at the right, which led to the gallery devoted to public use.

These benches were full; but no sooner had Cagliostro made a sign, and pronounced a word in a low tone, than two men vacated their front places, as if they had anticipated the arrival of Gilbert and the banker, and were only there to keep for them these seats, which the new-comers instantly accepted.

The meeting was not yet opened. The members were scattered over the half-lighted body of the house, some chatting in groups, others promenading in the narrow

space left open to them by the great number of their colleagues; while others, feeling isolated, were seated in the shadows or leaning against some massive pillar.

In semi-luminous strips, light from a few lamps fell upon the crowd; but individuals could not be distinguished, unless their faces or their bodies happened accidentally to come within range of one of these feeble fountains of flame; yet it was easy to perceive, even in the darkness, that this was an aristocratic reunion. Laced coats abounded, and the uniforms of officers, both naval and military, dotting the crowd with scintillations of gold and silver.

Indeed at this period there was not a workman, not a man of the people, — we had almost said, not a tradesman, — to republicanize this illustrious association.

For fellows of the inferior class there was another hall, below this one, which was opened at another hour, so that the aristocracy and common folks need not jostle each other.

For the instruction of the people they had established a Fraternal Society, whose members undertook to explicate the Constitution and post themselves as to the Rights of Humanity.

As for the Jacobin Society, as has been said, it was at this time a military, aristocratic, intellectual, and — above all — a literary and artistic organization; for, indeed, artists and men of letters were in its majority.

Among literary men there were La Harpe, author of "Mélanie;" Chenier, author of "Charles the Ninth;" Andrieux, author of "Les Étourdis," who already, at the age of thirty, gave the same promise as at sixty-six, and who "died without the sight," always promising great things, but never achieving them. There was also Sedaine, the old gem-cutter, protected by the Queen, and therefore a Royalist at heart, as were most of those present. There

was Chamfort, the poet laureate, ex-secretary to the Prince de Condé, and reader to Madame Elizabeth. There was Laclos, a man attached to the interests of Orleans, the author of "Dangerous Liaisons," — a man who stood in his patron's place, and whose mission was either to call the Duke to the remembrance of his friends, or to let him be forgotten by his enemies, according to circumstances.

Among artists, there was Talma, who had just inaugurated a theatric revolution, in the Roman part of Titus. Thanks to him, the actors and people were cutting their hair, while waiting for his colleague, Collot d'Herbois, to cut off their heads. There was David, who dreamed of painting Leonidas and The Sabines, who was outlining his great canvas of The Oath in the Tennis Court, and who, perchance, had already bought the pencils with which he drew his grandest and most hideous picture, Marat Assassinated in his Bath.

There was Vernet, who had been admitted to the Academy two years before, on account of a great picture, and amused himself by painting horses and dogs. He did not suspect that four paces away from him, in that gathering, on the arm of Talma, was a young Corsican lieutenant, with smooth hair and no powder, for whom, unknown to himself, Vernet was one day to prepare five out of his six finest pictures: Napoleon Crossing the Alps, and the battles of Rivoli, Marengo, Austerlitz, and Wagram. There was Larive, the surviving representative of the declamatory school of the drama, who did not deign to recognize a rival in young Talma, but preferred Voltaire to Corneille, and Belloy to Racine. There was Laïs the singer, who was the pearl of the opera in such rôles as the Merchant, in "The Caravan," the Consul, in "Trajan," and Cinna, in "The Vestal." There were Lafayette, Lameth, Duport, Sieyès, Thouret, Chapellier,

Rabaut Saint Étienne, Lanjuinais, Montlosier. In the midst of everything, with his aggravating mien and nose in the air, was the cheeky face of Barnave, the Deputy from Grenoble, whom shallow adherents put forward as a rival of Mirabeau, but whom Mirabeau flattened out whenever he condescended to put his foot on him.

Gilbert took a long look over the brilliant gathering, recognizing almost everybody, and mentally appreciating their diverse capabilities, which did little to inspire him with hope, although the Royalist character of the assemblage comforted him somewhat.

"To sum it all up," said he suddenly to Cagliostro, "what man do you see among all these, who is really hostile to the monarchy?"

"Must I look with the eyes of the world in general, with those of Necker or Abbé Maury, with yours or with my own?"

"With yours, of course," replied Gilbert. "Is it not understood that yours are the eyes of a magician?"

"Well, there are two."

"Well, that's not many, out of four hundred."

"It is enough; for one of these men is to be the murderer and the other the kingly successor of Louis Sixteenth."

Gilbert started and murmured: "So we have here our future Brutus and our future Cæsar."

"Neither more nor less, my dear Doctor."

"You will let me see them, will you not?" said Gilbert, with a sceptical smile on his lips.

"Oh, thou apostle of the scale-covered eyes!" murmured Cagliostro. "I can do better, if thou wilt. I will let thee clasp their hands. With which shall I begin?"

"With the subverter, I think. I have respect for chronological order, so let us first see Brutus."

"Thou knowest," said Cagliostro, as if suddenly animated by a breeze of inspiration, "thou knowest that different men never proceed by the same methods, even to accomplish a kindred purpose. Our Brutus does not in any way resemble the ancient Brutus."

"All the more reason why I am curious to see him."

"Well, look there!" said Cagliostro, extending his hand in the direction of a man leaning against the old pulpit. His head was just then in the light, though the rest of his body was lost in the shadow.

His pale and livid face resembled a severed head, such as in ancient times of proscription they used to nail upon the rostrum during a speech. The eyes alone seemed to be alive, with an expression of hatred almost contemptuous, — like the expression of a viper, who knows that his tooth contains mortal venom, — as they followed the blatant and verbose Barnave in his various evolutions about the place.

Gilbert felt a shudder run throughout his body as he looked at this viperous face. "It is true, as you said beforehand, that is neither the head of a Brutus nor a Cromwell."

"No," said Cagliostro, "but perhaps it is the head of a Cassius. You know, my dear fellow, what Julius Cæsar said: 'I have no fear of gross men, who pass their days at table and their nights in dissipation; no, but I fear the dreamers, with meagre bodies and pale faces.'"

Gilbert recalled Shakespeare's lines:

> Let me have men about me that are fat,
> Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights.
> Yond Cassius hath a lean and hungry look!
> He thinks too much; such men are dangerous.
> He loves no plays; he hears no music;
> Seldom he smiles.

"The man whom you designate certainly fulfils the conditions prescribed by Cæsar."

"Don't you know him?" asked Cagliostro.

"Well, yes," said Gilbert, gazing at the man attentively, "I do know him, or rather I recognize him as a member of the National Assembly."

"Even so!"

"One of the most tedious orators on the left."

"Just so!"

"Whom nobody listens to when he speaks."

"Exactly."

"A petty lawyer from Arras, is he not, whom they call Maximilian de Robespierre."

"Precisely! Now look attentively at that head!"

"I am looking at it."

"What do you see?"

"I am no Lavater, Count."

"No, but you are one of his disciples."

"I see an expression of the spite felt by mediocrity towards genius."

"That is to say, you judge like all the rest of the world. It is true his voice is feeble, a little sharp perhaps. His face is sunken and sad. The skin on his forehead seems to be bound tight about his cranium, like stiff and yellow parchment. His glassy eye only emits a greenish flame, which he quickly extinguishes. His careworn physiognomy is tiresome by its very immobility; his invariable olive-green coat is odd, threadbare, and too well brushed. Yes, I understand how all these peculiarities make but small impression in our Assembly, rich in orators, which has a right to be critical, accustomed as it is to the lionlike face of Mirabeau, the self-sufficient impudence of Barnave, the cutting repartee of Abbé Maury, the fervor of Cazalès, the logic of Sieyès;

but as for this man, they cannot reproach him with immorality, as they do Mirabeau, for he is an upright man. He never forgets his principles; and if he sometimes oversteps the bounds of legality, it is that he may kill the old text with the new law, and put the letter below the spirit."

"But after all," asked Gilbert, "who is this man Robespierre?"

"Ah, art thou here, thou aristocrat of the century? It was the Earl of Strafford, who asked a similar question concerning the man who was afterwards to decapitate his Lordship, 'Who is this Cromwell? A beer-seller, is n't he?'"

"Do you mean to say that my head runs the same risk as Sir Thomas Wentworth's?" asked Gilbert, trying to emit a smile, which froze on his lips.

"Who knows?" replied Cagliostro.

"All the more reason for me to be well posted about him," said the Doctor.

"Who is Robespierre? Well, nobody in France knows him, except myself; but I always mean to know whence come the elect ones of Fate, and all about them, for this knowledge helps me to divine whither they will go. — The Robespierres are Irish by descent. Perhaps their ancestors formed part of the Irish colonists who, in the Sixteenth Century, came over to fill up the monasteries and seminaries of our northern coasts, where they received from the Jesuits that thorough education in scholastic quibbling which those Reverend Fathers always gave their pupils. The Robespierres were notaries, from father to son. One branch of the family, from which this man descends, established itself at Arras, a great centre, as you know, for both nobles and churchmen. In this old city were two lords, or rather two kings. One was the Abbé of Saint

Wast; the other was the Bishop of Arras, whose palace shadows half the city. It was in that city that our man was born, in 1758. What he did as a boy, what he did as a youth, what he is doing to-day, I will tell you in two words. What he will do hereafter I have already told you, in one word. There were four children in the house. The head of the family lost his wife. He was an attorney at the bar of the Department of Artois; but he fell into a melancholy mood, ceased to plead in court, and finally went on a recuperative voyage, from which he never returned. At the age of eleven the eldest child, this one, found himself the head of the family, the guardian of his brother and two sisters, — a singular duty at such an age! The boy understood his task, and it at once made a man of him. In twenty-four hours he became what he still remains, — with a face which seldom smiles, a heart which never laughs. He was the best scholar in the school. They obtained for him, through the Abbé of Saint Wast, one of those scholarships which the Abbé had at his disposal in the College Louis le Grand. He came to Paris, recommended to a canon of Notre Dame Cathedral; but during that year this good priest died, and, almost at the same time, the boy's youngest and best-loved sister died at Arras. The shadow of the Jesuits, who have since been expelled from France, at that period threw its gloom over the walls of Louis le Grand. You know this edifice, where your young Sebastien is now growing up. Its corridors, deep and dark as those of the Bastille, would draw the color from the freshest cheeks. Young Robespierre's cheek was already pale, and now it became livid. Other boys went out sometimes. For them the year had Sundays and holidays; but for this orphan bursar, without a protector, all days were alike. When the others breathed the air of their families and homes, he breathed only the

atmosphere of solitude, sorrow, and weariness, — three pernicious blasts, which kindle envy and malice in the heart, and rob the soul of its bloom. This simoon withered the child, and made of him a faded young man. Some day nobody will believe that there was ever a portrait of him, at the age of twenty-four, holding a rose in one hand, and pressing the other to his breast, with this motto: *All for my sweetheart!*"

Gilbert smiled sadly, as he continued to gaze upon Robespierre.

"It is true," resumed Cagliostro, "that when he adopted this device, and had himself painted in this attitude, a certain young girl swore that nothing should part their destinies. He swore likewise, and was a man to keep his oath. He went away for three months, and on his return, found her married. Meanwhile the Abbé of Saint Wast remained his protector, having found for the younger brother a scholarship in College Louis le Grand, and having procured for our hero a position as Judge in the Criminal Tribunal. There came a case to be tried, an assassin to punish. Full of remorse over this discharge of duty, he let the third culprit escape with his life, although the man was proved guilty. He then resigned his office, and became an advocate, but could not earn enough for himself and the support of his little sister; but fortunately their brother, though poorly fed at the College Louis le Grand, still had a home there. Hardly had our man put his name on the list of advocates in Artois, when the peasantry begged him to plead their cause in some suit against the Bishop of Arras. They were in the right, as Robespierre was convinced by an examination of the evidence, and so he pleaded their cause, and won the case for the peasantry; and in the flush of his success he was elected to the National Assem-

bly. In this Assembly he found himself between the two fires of malice and contempt: malice, on the part of the clergy, towards a fellow who had dared to argue against them, — contempt, on the part of the nobility of Artois, for a pettifogger reared by charity."

"But," interrupted Gilbert, "what has he done up to the present time?"

"Oh my God, — almost nothing in other people's opinions, but plenty in mine. If it did not suit my views to have him poor, I would give him a million to-morrow."

"But, once more I ask, what has he done?"

"You remember the day when the clergy came hypocritically to the Assembly, to beg the Third Estate, kept in suspense by the royal veto, to begin their labors?"

"Yes!"

"Well, read over again the speech which he made that day, and see if there is not a career for such acrid vehemence, which was almost eloquence."

"But since then?"

"Since then? Well, we are obliged to jump from May to October. On the fifth of that month, when Maillard, delegated by the women of Paris, came to harangue the Assembly, in behalf of his constituents, all the members sat mute and motionless in their places; but this little lawyer not only proved himself sharper but more audacious than anybody else. All the professed defenders of the people held their tongues, but he took the floor. The time before, he had spoken in the midst of a tumult; but the second time, amidst profound silence. He supported Maillard, who pleaded on account of the famine, and demanded bread."

"Yes indeed," said Gilbert, thoughtfully, "this becomes graver; but perhaps he will change."

"Oh my dear Doctor, you do not understand this Incorruptible, as they now call him. Besides, who would try to bribe a little pettifogger, whom everybody laughs at? Hereafter that man — mark what I tell you! — will be the terror of the Assembly, as he is now its laughing-stock. It is understood among the noble Jacobins that Robespierre is the clown of the Assembly, who amuses them, and ought to amuse the public, — a man whom everybody can and should make game of. When the members get aweary in their long meetings, they need some gawk to cheer them up. In the eyes of Lameth, Cazalès, Maury, Barnave, Duport, this Robespierre is such a jester. His associates betray him by laughing in their sleeves; his enemies hoot and laugh aloud. When he speaks, everybody chatters. When he raises his voice, everybody shouts. When he makes a speech, — always on the right side, and in defence of some principle, — a speech to which nobody listens, some insignificant member, on whom the Speaker fixes his eye, ironically demands that the address be printed. Only one of his fellow-members at all understands him, — one only! Can you guess who? Mirabeau, who yesterday said to me: 'That man will go far, because he believes what he says;' — a singular thing for Mirabeau to say, as you can well understand."

"But," said Gilbert, "I have read this man's speeches, and I have found them insipid and commonplace."

"Good gracious, I did n't tell you he was a Cicero or a Demosthenes, a Mirabeau or a Barnave! No! He is the simpleton Monsieur de Robespierre, as they affect to call him. Besides, his speeches are treated in the same style by the printers as by the Assembly. On the tribune they interrupt him. At the printing-house they mutilate him. The journalists do not even call him

Monsieur de Robespierre. The reporters do not even know his name. They call him Monsieur B., Monsieur N., or Monsieur ——. God alone, and perhaps myself, knows what an amount of gall is massed in that thin breast, what tempests lodged in that narrow brain; because he has neither the distractions of society, nor the solace of family life, to make the hissed orator forget all these insults and injuries, this treachery, — against a man, moreover, who is conscious of his own ability, and feels the sting. In his gloomy apartment in the gloomy district of Marais, in a poor, cold, unfurnished lodging on the Rue Saintonge, — where he lives parsimoniously on his salary as Deputy, — he is as much alone as he was in the damp corridors of College Louis le Grand. Even up to last year his face was young and mild; but you can see that within a year his face has withered, dried up, like the heads of those Caribbean chiefs, which such men as Captain Cook and La Perouse brought from Oceanica. He never leaves the Jacobin Club; and apart from the emotions with which he suffers, unseen by others, he has suffered two or three times with hemorrhages, which left him insensible. You are a great mathematician, Gilbert, but I defy you, even with the most extended multiplications, to calculate the amount of blood which it will cost the aristocrats who insult this man, the priests who persecute him, and even the King who never heard of him, — blood which Robespierre will shed."

"But why does he come to the Jacobin meetings?"

"Ah, that 's it! Hooted in the Assembly, he is heard at the Club. This Society, my dear Doctor, is an infant Minotaur. It begins with a cow, but later it may devour a nation. Well, Robespierre is a type of the Jacobins. The association is summed up in him, and he is the expression of the association, — nothing more, nothing less.

He will keep equal step with the Jacobins, going neither behind them nor ahead of them. I promised, did I not, to let you see an instrument, with which its inventor is just now busy, which has for its object the removal of one or two heads a minute? Well, of all the personages here present, the one who will give the most employment to that instrument of death is Robespierre."

"Truly, you are funereal, Count," said Gilbert; "and if your Cæsar gives me no more comfort than your Brutus, I shall be quite capable of forgetting the occasion which brought me here. Pardon me, but what has become of our Cæsar?"

"Hold, you may see him down there. He is chatting with a man with whom he is not yet acquainted, but who later will have a great influence over his destiny. That man's name is Barras. Remember the name, for you will hear it again in due time."

"I do not know if you are correct, Count," said Gilbert, "but in this case you have chosen your illustration well. Your Cæsar has the veritable forehead for a crown; and his eyes, whose expression I do not quite catch —"

"Yes, because he is looking inward. Those are eyes which read the future, Doctor."

"What is he saying to Barras?"

"He tells him that if he himself had defended the Bastille, it would not have been taken."

"Then he is not a Patriot?"

"Men like him never care to be anything, unless they can be first and foremost."

"Then you are jesting at the expense of that little sub-lieutenant?"

"Gilbert," said Cagliostro, pointing again towards Robespierre, "as sure as that man there will rebuild the scaffold of Charles the First, so surely will that other

man there," pointing to the Corsican with the smooth hair, "reconstruct the throne of Charlemagne."

"Then our struggle for liberty will be futile," said Gilbert, discouraged.

"And who says that the one will not do as much for liberty with his throne, as the other with his scaffold?"

"The lieutenant will then be a Titus, a Marcus Aurelius, a god of peace, coming to console the world in an age of bronze?"

"He will be at the same time an Alexander and a Hannibal. Born in the midst of war, he will wax great by war, and by war he will wane. I defied you to calculate the blood which it will cost the clergy and nobility of France, which Robespierre will demand. Take all the blood which is shed by these priests and nobles, enlarge it by multiplication upon multiplication, and you will not then reach the river, the lake, the sea of blood which that man will pour out, with his armies of five hundred thousand soldiers, and his battles three days long, which will demand fifty thousand cannon-shots."

"And what will come of all this noise, this smoke, this chaos?"

"The result of every Genesis! We are intrusted with the duty of burying the old world. Our children will see the birth of a brave new world. This lieutenant is the giant who will guard the door. Like Louis Fourteenth, like Leo Tenth, like Augustus, he will give his name to the century now opening."

"And what is his name?" asked Gilbert, fairly conquered by Cagliostro's positive conviction.

"He still calls himself Bonaparte," replied the prophet, "but some day he will call himself Napoleon."

Gilbert bowed his head, and fell into a revery so profound that he did not perceive, being absorbed by the

tenor of his thoughts, that the meeting was opened, and that an orator had ascended the rostrum.

An hour passed away, but neither the noise of the assemblage nor of its officers, for the meeting was a stormy one, could draw Gilbert away from his meditations, till he felt a powerful hand clasp and rest upon his shoulder.

He turned. Cagliostro had disappeared, but in his place he found Mirabeau, his face thunderous with anger. Gilbert looked at him questioningly.

"Well!" said Mirabeau.

"What is it?" asked Gilbert.

"It means that we are cajoled, mocked, betrayed. It means that the Crown will have none of me, and takes you for a dupe and me for a fool."

"I do not understand you!"

"You have not been listening, then?"

"To what?"

"The resolution which was just passed."

"Where?"

"Here!"

"What resolution?"

"You must have been asleep!"

"No," said Gilbert, "but I have been dreaming."

"Well, to-morrow, in response to my motion of to-day, which proposes that the cabinet ministers be invited to assist in the deliberations of the National Assembly, three friends of the King are going to demand that no member of the Assembly shall be a minister during its term. Therefore the ministerial combination, so carefully arranged, is broken up by the capricious whistle of his Majesty Louis the Sixteenth; but," continued Mirabeau, standing like Ajax, with his finger pointed towards the sky, "but, as surely as my name is Mirabeau, I'll pay

him back; and if his whistle can overturn a ministry, he 'll find out that mine will upset a throne!"

"But," said Gilbert, "you will not stay away from the Assembly on this account? You will still fight it out to the end?"

"I go to the Assembly? I fight it out? I am one of those men who are only to be buried under the ruins."

Half-distracted, Mirabeau went away, more grand and more terrible, for the deific frown imprinted on his face.

The next day indeed, on the motion of Lanjuinais, and in spite of the superhuman genius displayed by Mirabeau, the National Assembly adopted the obnoxious resolution by an immense majority, that no member of the Assembly should be appointed cabinet-minister during the term of the Assembly.

"And I," cried Mirabeau, when the decree was voted, "I propose an amendment which will not alter your law. Here it is! — that all the members of the present Assembly may be cabinet-ministers, except Monsieur le Comte de Mirabeau."

Every one looked stunned by this audacity. In the midst of a universal silence Mirabeau descended from the platform, with the same proud step with which he had once marched up to Dreux Brézé, and said to him: "We are here by the will of the people; we will only go out with bayonets in our bellies."

Then he left the hall. Mirabeau's defeat was like another man's triumph.

Gilbert did not even come to the Assembly. He remained at home, and reviewed the strange predictions of Cagliostro. Without believing them, he could not drive them out of his mind. The present seemed to him very small, when compared with the future.

Perhaps some one may ask how, as simply the historian

of a time already past, *temporis acti*, I can explain Cagliostro's predictions about Robespierre and Napoleon.

I ask of those who so question me, to explain the prediction of Mademoiselle Lenormand to the Empress Josephine.

At every step in the world we meet something inexplicable. It is for those who cannot explain these marvels, and yet do not wish to believe them, that scepticism has been invented.

CHAPTER XXX.

METZ AND PARIS.

As Cagliostro had declared, and as Mirabeau had surmised, it was the King who had overturned all Gilbert's projects.

In the overtures to Mirabeau, Marie Antoinette had acted with passionate spite and womanly curiosity, rather than queenly policy, and therefore she saw without regret the downfall of the scaffolding of a Constitutional Government, which had always keenly wounded her pride.

As to the King, his policy was always limited to procrastination, gaining time, and profiting by circumstances. Moreover, two negotiations were pending in opposite directions, each offering the opportunity of flight from Paris, and one looking to his residence in some well-fortified place, — his favorite plan.

Of these two negotiations, as we know, one was engineered by Favras, a gentleman in the interest of *Monsieur* de Provence. The other was in the hands of Charny, the special messenger of King Louis.

Charny made the journey from Paris to Metz in two days. He waited upon Commander Bouillé at Metz, and delivered the King's missive. This letter, it will be remembered, was only to be the means of putting Charny into communication with Bouillé; so the Commander, although not concealing his dissatisfaction with current affairs, began by maintaining great reserve towards his visitor.

In fact, the suggestions made by Charny to Bouillé interfered seriously with the plans of the Commander. The Empress Catherine had offered him a command; and he was on the point of writing to the King, asking leave to accept a Russian commission, when this letter from Louis Sixteenth made its appearance.

Bouillé's first impulse, therefore, was one of hesitation; but the name of Charny brought to remembrance the Count's relationship with Monsieur de Suffren, and the common rumor that the Queen honored Charny with her entire confidence; and as Bouillé was a faithful Royalist, he felt himself permeated with a desire to snatch the King from that factitious freedom which many regarded as real captivity.

Before coming to any understanding with Charny, however, Bouillé suggested that his authority was not sufficiently extended, and determined upon sending his son Louis de Bouillé to Paris, for a personal interview with his Majesty on this important subject.

Charny remained in Metz during their negotiations, partly because nothing personal recalled him to Paris, and partly from a somewhat exaggerated sense of honor, which made him feel it his duty to stay in Metz as a sort of hostage.

Count Louis arrived in Paris in the middle of November. At this period the King was carefully guarded from sight by Lafayette, and young Bouillé was a cousin to Lafayette.

The young man stayed at the residence of one of his friends, whose patriotic opinions were well known, but who was then travelling in England.

For Count Louis to visit the palace without the knowledge of Lafayette, was dangerous and difficult, if not impossible.

From one point of view, although Lafayette was to be kept in complete ignorance of the entanglements between Charny, Commander Bouillé, and the King, nothing seemed simpler than for the young man to procure his presentation to the King by Lafayette himself; and circumstances seemed of their own accord to favor the desires of the young officer.

He had been three days in Paris, having as yet decided upon nothing definite, but pondering by what means he could come near the King, and asking himself, as we have just said, if the surest way would not be to speak to Lafayette himself; when there came a letter from the General, informing Louis that his arrival in Paris was known, and inviting him to come to the headquarters of the National Guard, at the Noailles Mansion.

This was in a certain way the answer of Providence, from on high, to the prayer which the young man had silently sent upward. Here was a good fairy, such as we read of in the charming stories of Perrault, taking our knight by the hand, and leading him towards his destination.

He therefore at once reported himself at the staff-office. The General had gone to the Hôtel de Ville, where he was to receive a communication from Bailly; but in the absence of the General, Louis encountered his aide-de-camp, Monsieur Romeuf.

Romeuf had served in the same regiment with the young Count, and there were pleasant relations between them, albeit one belonged to the democratic and the other to the aristocratic party. Since then Romeuf had been transferred to another regiment, one of those which were mustered out of service after the Fourteenth of July; and he then resumed service in the National Guard, where he held the position of favorite aide to Lafayette.

These two young men, although wholly differing in opinion on certain subjects, agreed in this, that both loved and respected the King; although one loved him in Patriotic fashion, — on condition that he would swear to and abide by the Constitution; while the other loved him after the Aristocratic fashion, — on condition that he should refuse the Constitutional oath, and, if necessary, call in foreign arms, to bring the rebels to terms.

By *rebels* young Bouillé meant three-quarters of the Assembly, the National Guard, the electors, and so on, — five-sixths of all France.

Romeuf being twenty-six years old, and Count Louis twenty-two, it was rather difficult for the young fellows to long confine their conversation to politics, — especially as Louis did not wish his comrade to suspect him of being engaged in any serious scheme.

He confided to his friend Romeuf, as a great secret, that he had left Metz without formal permission, in order to visit Paris and see a woman whom he adored.

While he was imparting this confidence to the aide, Lafayette appeared on the threshold of the door, which remained open; but although Louis could see the unexpected arrival reflected in the mirror facing them both, he nevertheless continued his narrative; only, in spite of various signs from Romeuf, which he pretended not to understand, he raised his voice in such a way that the General could not miss a solitary word. In fact the General heard everything, which was precisely what young Louis intended.

Lafayette walked slowly towards the speaker's back; and when the story was finished, he laid his hand on the narrator's shoulder, and said to him: "Ah ha, Monsieur Lover, that is why you keep out of the way of your respectable kinsfolk!"

He was no severe judge, this gay General of thirty-two years, this mild-frowning mentor, — himself quite the rage among women of fashion, — and Count Louis was not greatly disturbed by the homily which awaited him.

"I have concealed myself a little, my dear cousin, until to-day, when I should have done myself the honor to call upon the most illustrious of my kindred, even if he had not forestalled my intention by this message;" and he showed the General the letter just received.

"Do you country gentlemen suppose the Parisian police are so blind and so badly managed?" said the General, with an air of satisfaction which proved that a certain amount of self-esteem entered into his reliance upon the police.

"We know that nothing is concealed from the brave General who watches over the liberties of the people and the safety of the King."

Lafayette looked sidewise at his young cousin, with that air of good-nature, humorous and somewhat jocose, which we have before seen in him. He knew that the safety of the King was very important to that branch of the family, but that they did not concern themselves much about the liberties of the people.

He therefore responded to only half of the compliment. "And my cousin, the Marquis de Bouillé," he said, emphasizing a title which he had renounced for himself since the Fourth of August, "has he not charged his son with some commission for the King whose welfare I guard?"

"He charged me to place at his feet his homage and sentiments of respect, if General Lafayette should not judge me unworthy of a presentation to my sovereign."

"Present you, — and when?"

"As soon as possible, General. I believe I have had

the honor of telling you, or Romeuf, that being here without furlough —"

"You told Romeuf, but it comes to the same thing, as I heard it all. Very well, let us see, — good things ought not to be retarded. It is eleven o'clock in the forenoon. Every day, at noon, I have the honor of seeing the King and Queen. Eat a morsel with me, if you have not already breakfasted, and I will take you to the Tuileries."

"But am I properly dressed, my dear cousin?" asked the young fellow, glancing over his uniform and his boots.

"First of all I must tell you, dear boy, that the great business of etiquette, which you imbibed with your mother's milk, has been sick unto death since your departure from town. Besides, as I look you over, your coat is irreproachable, your boots are all right; and what costume is more appropriate than a military uniform, for a gentleman who is ready to die for his King? Romeuf, go and see if breakfast is ready. I will take my cousin to the Tuileries immediately afterwards."

This plan corresponded so directly with the young man's wishes that he could make no serious objection; so he bowed in token of his assent and obligation.

A half-hour afterwards the sentinels at the gates presented arms to General Lafayette and the young Count, with no suspicion that they were paying military honors at the same time to the Revolution and the Counter-Revolution.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE QUEEN.

LAFAYETTE and Louis de Bouillé ascended the smaller staircase in the Marsan Pavilion, and betook themselves to the main (or second) floor, which their Majesties occupied.

All doors opened before Lafayette. Sentinels presented arms and footmen bowed low, easily recognizing him as master of the palace, and as the King's king.

Lafayette was first admitted into the Queen's apartments. As for the King, he was at his forge, and some one was sent to inform his Majesty.

It was three years since young Bouillé had seen Marie Antoinette.

During these three years the States General had been convened, the Bastille had been captured, and the sad occurrences of the Fifth and Sixth October had intervened.

The Queen had reached the age of thirty-four, the touching and attractive age, as Michelet expresses it, which Vandyck so liked to paint, — the age of wifehood and motherhood, — and, in the case of Marie Antoinette, the queenly age.

Within those three years the Queen had suffered in mind and heart, in love and self-esteem. Her thirty-four years were written on the poor lady's cheeks in lines of purple and violet, which told their story of tear-filled eyes and sleepless nights, which testified the deep malady of the womanly heart, which is never entirely

healed, be she queen or commoner, till it is utterly extinguished.

This was the age at which Mary Stuart, even as a prisoner, inspired Douglas, Mortimer, Norfolk, and Babington with a passion so strong that they devoted themselves to death for her sake.

The sight of this Queen, imprisoned, hated, calumniated, threatened, — and the events of the Fifth October proved these menaces to be no idle threats, — made a profound impression on the heart of the chivalrous young Louis de Bouillé.

Women never err as to the effect they produce, and as kings and queens have a peculiar memory for faces, — which in a certain sense is part of their education, — Marie Antoinette hardly perceived the young man before she recognized him, and had scarcely looked into his eyes before she felt positive that this was the face of a loving friend.

The consequence was that before the General had time to make the presentation, before they even reached the foot of the lounge whereon the Queen was reclining, she raised herself, as one naturally does for an old acquaintance, whom it is pleasant to meet again, or a follower, on whose fidelity one may depend, and cried: "Ah, Monsieur de Bouillé!"

Without paying any attention to Lafayette's words, she extended her hand to the young man. Louis hesitated an instant, for he had not anticipated she would grant him such a favor; but as the royal hand remained extended, he threw himself on his knees, and touched that hand with tremulous lips.

This was one of the Queen's blunders, and she made many like unto it. Without this favor young Bouillé would have been equally won to her side; and by such a

favor, accorded to his cousin in presence of Lafayette himself, — to whom she had never extended such a courtesy, — she set up a line of demarcation between them, and offended the man whom she most needed to make her friend.

With that courtesy which he was incapable of forgetting for an instant, but not without a perceptible alteration in his voice, he said: "On my faith, dear Cousin Louis, I was expected to present you to her Majesty, but it seems to me as if *you* should the rather present *me*."

The Queen was so rejoiced to find herself face to face with an adherent whom she could trust, — the woman was so proud of the effect she had evidently wrought upon the Count, — that she was conscious, in her heart, of the renewed glory of a youth she had believed forever vanished, and felt the spring breezes of a love which she had supposed forever dead. In this mood she turned to the General, with such a smile as she used to wear at Versailles and the Trianon, and said: "Dear General, the Count is no such stern Republican as yourself. He comes from Metz, not from America. He does not seek Paris in order to labor over the Constitution; he comes but to offer me his homage. Be not surprised when I accord to him — I, a poor queen, half dethroned — a courtesy which, to a simple provincial like himself, may seem worth being called a favor; but which to *you*, inasmuch — " and the Queen supplied the missing words with a coy expression of charming raillery, like the coquetry of a young girl, as if she would say: "Inasmuch as you, Monsieur Scipio, you, Monsieur Cincinnatus, look down upon such frivolities — "

"Madame," replied Lafayette, "I have ever adhered respectfully and devotedly to my Queen, without her comprehending my respect or appreciating my devotion. This

may be a great misfortune for me, and perhaps also for her!" and he bowed as he spoke.

The Queen regarded him with her deep and clear eye. More than once Lafayette had spoken similar words to her. More than once she had meditated over such words, after they were spoken. Unhappily for her, when he thus uttered himself, she always felt an instinctive repulsion towards him.

"Indeed, General," she said, "you must be generous, and forgive me."

"I, Madame, forgive you? And for what?"

"My enthusiastic welcome to this good family of Bouillés, who love me with all their hearts, and between whom and myself this young man may well be the connecting thread, the electric chain. When he entered, it was his father, his uncles, all his family, who rose to my view, and kissed my hand with loyal lips."

Lafayette bowed again.

"Monsieur," continued the Queen, "after the pardon, the peace, — with a good shake of the hand, in English or American fashion."

She gave him her hand, but with the palm upwards. Lafayette clasped it slowly and coldly, saying: "I regret that you will never recollect that I am a Frenchman, Madame. It is not so very far from the Sixth of October to the Sixteenth of November."

"You are right, General," she said, making an effort to control herself, and pressing his hand; "it is I who am ungrateful!" and she sank back on her lounge as if overcome with emotion. "But this ought not to surprise you, — you, who know how often I am upbraided for ingratitude."

Presently, shaking her head, she added: "Now, General, what is there new in Paris?"

Lafayette had a chance to retaliate, and he seized his opportunity.

"Ah, Madame, how much I regret that you were not at the Assembly yesterday. You would have witnessed a touching scene, one that would have moved your heart. An old man came to thank the Assembly for the happiness he owed to it, — and to the King, inasmuch as the Assembly could not have conferred that happiness without the royal sanction."

"An old man?" repeated the Queen, inattentively.

"Yes, Madame, and such an old man, — the Dean, the Nestor, of the human race! — an emancipated peasant from Jura, one hundred and twenty years old, led to the bar by five generations of his descendants, that he might thank the Assembly for the Fourth of August decrees. Do you understand, Madame? — a man who had been a feudal appendage for a half-century under Louis Fourteenth, and eighty years afterward."

"And what did the Assembly do for this old man?"

"They rose, to a man, and he was compelled to sit down, and put on his hat in their presence."

"Ah," rejoined the Queen, in a tone peculiar to herself, "this must indeed have been very touching. I regret I was not there; but you know better than anybody else," added she, smiling, "that I am not always where I want to be."

The General made a motion which signified that he had something to say in reply; but the Queen went on, without giving him time to speak: "No, I was here, receiving the poor wife of that unfortunate baker, — the Assembly's baker, — whom the Assembly allowed to be assassinated almost at its doors. What was the Assembly doing that day, Monsieur?"

"You talk, Madame," responded the General, "of one

of those evils which have harassed the Representatives of France; but if the Assembly could not prevent the murder, the murderers have at least been punished."

"Oh yes, but their punishment has not comforted this poor woman. She was almost crazy, and it is thought she will be brought to bed with a stillborn child. If her babe is living, I have promised to be its godmother; and in order that the public may know that I am not insensible to such of their misfortunes as come to my knowledge, I ask you, dear General, if it will be too great an inconvenience if the baptism takes place at Notre Dame."

Lafayette lifted his hand, like one who was about to ask permission to speak, and is glad to have it granted, and said: "Madame, this is the second allusion you have made, within a few moments, to the pretended captivity in which some would have it believed that you are held by your faithful servants. I must hasten to say, before my cousin here, — and I will repeat it before Paris, before Europe, before the world, — as I wrote yesterday to Monsieur Mounier, who, from the interior of Dauphiny, laments the royal captivity, — that you are free; and I have but one desire, I address to you but one petition, — that your Majesties will put this to the proof, the King by resuming his sports and his drives, and you by accompanying him."

The Queen smiled, as if hardly convinced.

"As to being godmother to this poor little orphan, born into so much mourning, in making this agreement with the widow, the Queen has obeyed her kind heart, which makes her loved and respected by all who are close about her. If the Queen will select the church where she wishes the ceremony to take place, and will give her

orders, when the day arrives for the ceremony, all shall be made ready according to those orders. Meanwhile," he continued, bowing, "I await any other orders wherewith the Queen may deign to honor me to-day."

"For to-day, my dear General, I have only one other request, — that you invite your young cousin, if he remains a few days longer in Paris, to accompany you to one of Madame de Lamballe's receptions; for you know she receives for me as well as for herself."

"And I, Madame, will avail myself of the invitation, for both his sake and my own; and if her Majesty has not seen me there before, I pray her to be persuaded that it was because she has heretofore forgotten to manifest a wish to meet me there."

The Queen responded with an inclination of the head and a smile, which amounted to dismissal. Each of the two cousins accepted that which was meant for him, — Lafayette the salutation, Count Louis the smile; and then withdrew backwards, the one bearing away more bitterness in his heart, and the other more devotion.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE KING.

At the entrance of the Queen's apartments the two visitors found the King's valet, François Hue, awaiting them.

The King had sent word, that having begun, for his recreation, a very important piece of lock-work, he begged General Lafayette to come upstairs to the shop.

A forge was the first thing the King inquired about on his arrival at the Tuileries. Learning that this indispensable appendage had been forgotten in the building plans of Catherine de Medicis and Philibert de Lorme, he selected a large attic, — just above his own bedchamber, — with a staircase both from the inside and outside, and there established his workshop for lockmaking. Louis Sixteenth had not for an instant forgotten this workshop, even amidst the grave questions which had assailed him during the five weeks he had been at the Tuileries. With him the forge was a fixed idea. He had presided over its arrangements, and had himself designated the proper places for the bellows, the fire, the anvil, the bench, and the vises. At last the forge had been completed, the evening before. All sorts of implements were provided. Round files, bastard files, toothed files, fish-tongue and donkey files, were all in their places. One-sided hammers, cross hammers, pointed hammers, hung from their rightful nails. Tongs, pincers, rabbets, and holding irons were within reach of the workman's hands.

Louis Sixteenth could wait no longer, and ever since morning he had been hard at this work, which was such a relief to his mind, a work in which he might have been a past master, as we have already learned from Master Gamain, if, to that worthy man's great regret, such idle fellows as Turgot, Calonne, and Necker had not distracted him from that learned occupation, by talking, not only about the affairs of France, — which Gamain's rigor might have allowed, — but also about other matters, which appeared to him very useless, relating to Brabant, Austria, England, America, and Spain.

All this explains why the King, in the renewed ardor of his work, had begged Lafayette to come upstairs to the shop, instead of himself coming down to greet the General.

Moreover, having allowed the Commander of the National Guard to see his feebleness as a king, he was not unwilling to let him see his majesty as a locksmith.

In order to conduct the visitors to the Royal Forge, the valet did not think proper to take them through the King's suite of rooms, and up by the private staircase, so they circumnavigated the royal apartments by way of the corridors, and ascended the public staircase, which made the distance somewhat longer.

The result of this deviation from the direct line was, that young Count Louis had more time for reflection; and he reflected accordingly.

Though his heart was filled with the Queen's gracious reception of him, he could not misconceive the fact that she had not expected him. Not an ambiguous word, not a covert gesture had given him to understand that the august prisoner, as she styled herself, had any conception of the mission with which he was charged, or counted the least in the world on him, to free her from her thraldom;

and this agreed with what he had gleaned from Charny, as to the King's concealment of their scheme from everybody, even from the Queen.

Whatever satisfaction it gave Count Louis to see the Queen once more, it was evident that he could not look to her for the solution of his problem.

He must therefore observe carefully if, in the King's reception of him, in even a word or motion, he could detect any hint, meant solely for himself, that the King was better informed than Lafayette, as to the cause of young Louis's trip to Paris.

Not being acquainted with Count Louis, the valet turned when they reached the door of the shop, and inquired: "Whom shall I announce?"

"Announce the General in Chief of the National Guard. I will myself have the honor of presenting the other gentleman to his Majesty."

So the valet announced: "Monsieur the Commander of the National Guard!"

The King turned towards them, and said: "Ah, is it you, Monsieur Lafayette? I ask pardon for making you come all the way up here, but the locksmith assures you of a hearty welcome to his shop. A fellow once said to Henry Fourth, that even a charcoal-burner was master in his own house; so I say to you, you are as much the master here, in the blacksmith's shop, as in the King's regular apartments."

King Louis, as we may readily see, attacked the conversation very much in the same fashion as Marie Antoinette.

"Sire," responded Lafayette, "under whatsoever circumstances I may have the honor of presenting myself before the King, and on whatever floor or in whatever dress he may receive me, the King will be always King,

and the man who now offers his respectful homage will always be the King's faithful subject and devoted servant."

"I do not doubt it, Marquis! But you are not alone. Have you changed your aide-de-camp? Does this young officer take the place of either Gouvion or Romeuf?"

"This young officer, Sire, — and I ask the privilege of presenting him to your Majesty, — is my cousin, Louis de Bouillé, a captain in *Monsieur's* Dragoons."

"Oh yes!" said the King, with a slight start, which the young gentleman remarked, "oh yes, a son of the Marquis de Bouillé, Commander at Metz."

"The same, Sire," said the young Count with alacrity.

"Ah Monsieur, excuse me for failing to recognize you, but I am very near-sighted. — You have been some time away from Metz?"

"Only five days, Sire; but being in Paris without a regular furlough, though by the special permission of my father, I have solicited of my kinsman, the General, the honor of a presentation to your Majesty."

"You have done well to ask it of Lafayette, my dear young Count, for nobody is better able to present you, at all times, and through no one could the presentation be more agreeable."

The three words, *at all times*, indicated that Lafayette had kept up the privilege accorded to him at Versailles, of attending both general and special, both private and public receptions, — in fact, of seeing the King whenever it seemed best.

Moreover, the few words spoken by the King were sufficient to indicate to the young Count that he must be strictly on his guard. In particular the question, "Is it long since you left Metz?" meant, "Did you come away from Metz after Charny's arrival?"

The response of the young messenger sufficed for the King to understand his meaning. The statement, "I left Metz five days ago, and I am in Paris without military leave, though by my father's permission," signified: "Yes, Sire, I saw Monsieur de Charny; and my father has sent me to Paris to hear more from your Majesty, and learn certainly if Charny was acting in behalf of the King."

Lafayette glanced curiously about. Many were admitted into the King's business office, his council-chamber, his library, — even into his oratory, or private chapel; but few received the special favor of admission into his workshop, where the King was the apprentice, and where the true king, the veritable master, was Monsieur Gamain.

The General noticed the perfect order in which everything was arranged; but this was not really remarkable, as only on that morning had the King been able to begin work, Hue having acted as his apprentice, to pull the bellows.

Lafayette was embarrassed as to what subject he should take up, with a monarch who received him in such an off-hand fashion, with sleeves tucked up, a file in his hand, and a leathern apron in front of him; but at last he said: "Your Majesty is busy with an important piece of work?"

"Yes, General, I have undertaken the locksmith's greatest mechanism, a lock! I tell you what I am doing, so that if Marat should find out that I have again set up my workshop, and should pretend that I am forging fetters for France, you can assure him, if you clap your hands on him, that such a report is untrue. — You are neither a journeyman nor a master workman, I suppose, Monsieur de Bouillé?"

"No, Sire; but I am an apprentice, and if I could be of any use to your Majesty —"

"That's true, my dear cousin," said Lafayette; "the husband of your nurse was a locksmith, was n't he? I remember that your father once told me, although he had no great admiration for the author of 'Émile,' that he should have trained you as a locksmith, had he followed the advice of Jean Jacques Rousseau in your behalf."

"Precisely, Monsieur, and that is why I said to his Majesty, that if he needed an apprentice —"

"An apprentice would not be unserviceable to me, Monsieur," said the King; "but what I most need is a master."

"What sort of a lock is your Majesty making," asked the young man, with that half-familiarity authorized by the situation and attire of the King. "Is it a night-latch, a clover-leaf, a spring-lock, a bolt-lock, or a catch-lock?"

"Oh my cousin," said Lafayette, "I don't know what you can do about locks practically; but as a theorist you seem thoroughly posted about the — I will not call it a *trade*, since my sovereign has ennobled it — about the *art*."

The King had listened with evident pleasure to the nomenclature of locks given by the young fellow, and now replied: "No, it is only a concealed or mortised lock, opening on both sides; but I fear I have presumed too much on my own ability. Ah, if my poor Gamain were only here, — he who calls himself Master *of* masters, Master over all!"

"Is the good man dead, Sire?" asked young Louis.

"No," replied the King, — with a passing wink at the young man, as much as to say, *Read between the lines!* — "no, he lives at Versailles, Rue Reservoir. The dear fellow has n't dared to come and see me at the Tuileries."

"Why not, Sire?" asked Lafayette.

"For fear of compromising himself. A king of France is a very compromising sort of chap just now, my dear General, and the proof of it is, that all my friends are gone, some to London, others to Coblentz and Turin. However, my dear General, if you see nothing improper in Gamain's coming here some day, with one of his prentice-boys, to give me a little start, I will send for him."

"Sire," quickly answered Lafayette, "his Majesty knows very well that he is at perfect liberty to summon whom he will and see whomsoever he pleases."

"Yes, on condition that your sentinels cross-question visitors, as if they were smugglers on the frontier. My poor Gamain would think himself ruined entirely, if they should mistake his files for poniards, and his kit for a cartridge-box."

"Sire, I know not how to excuse myself to your Majesty; but I am responsible to Paris, to France, to Europe, for my sovereign's precious life, and I cannot take too many precautions for his safety. As to the smart fellow of whom we were talking, the King may give what orders seem to him best."

"That 's all right! Thanks, Monsieur Lafayette; but there is no hurry. In six or eight days I may want him," he added, with a side glance at Bouillé; "both him and his apprentice. I will send him word by my valet Durey, who is one of Gamain's friends."

"And he will only need to present himself, Sire, to be admitted. His name will be a sufficient passport. God shield me, Sire, from this reputation of being a jailer, a turnkey, a gatekeeper. Never was the King of France freer than at this moment. Indeed, I came with the idea of begging his Majesty to resume his outdoor sports, his hunting parties, his long rambles."

"As to the chase, — no, I thank you! Besides, just now I have other things to do. As to driving, wandering, that's another matter. My last trip from Versailles to Paris has rather cured me of any passion for travel, — at least, with such a great company of believers."

Here the King again glanced at the young nobleman, who, by a slight elevation of the eyelids, showed that he understood what the King had in mind.

"Meanwhile, Monsieur," added Louis Sixteenth, addressing himself directly to the young man, "shall you soon leave Paris, and return to your father?"

"Sire," he answered, "I shall leave Paris in two or three days, but not for Metz. I have an aged kinswoman, who lives at Versailles, on the Rue Reservoir, to whom I ought to pay my respects. Then I am intrusted by my father with the conclusion of an important family affair, and in eight or ten days I expect to see the party from whom I am to receive further directions about it. I shall not probably go back to my father before the early part of December, — that is, unless the King wishes, for any reason, that I should hasten my return to Metz."

"No, Monsieur! Take your own time. Go to Versailles. Attend to these family affairs, as your father has advised. Only, when they are done, go back to your father, and say that I have not forgotten him, that I know him to be among the *faithless, faithful found*, and that I shall some day recommend him to General Lafayette, in order that the General may recommend him to Monsieur du Portail for honorable advancement."

Lafayette smiled to himself at this new allusion to his own omnipotence. "Sire," he said, "I should long ago have commended the gentlemen of the Bouillé family to your Majesty's favor, if I had not the honor of being related to them. I am sometimes deterred from doing

justice to brave men, by the fear that I shall be accused of turning the favors of the King towards my own kinsfolk."

"Your forbearance is indeed unusual, and approaches the marvellous. We will talk of this hereafter!"

"The King will allow me to say," said the young Count at this juncture, "that my father would regard it as unkind, almost as a disgrace, if any military advancement should deprive him in whole or in part of the means of serving your Majesty."

"Oh, that's well understood, Count," said the King. "I shall not allow his position to be interfered with, unless to confer upon him one more in accordance with his desires and my own. Leave us to manage that, General Lafayette and myself, and betake yourself to your pleasures, — though without forgetting your business affairs. Adieu, gentlemen, adieu!"

The King dismissed them with a dignified air, in strong contrast to the coarse costume with which he was clothed.

When the door closed after them he said to himself: "Well, I think that young man understood me, and that in six or eight days I shall have Master Gamain and his apprentice to aid me in finishing my lock."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

OLD ACQUAINTANCES.

Between five and six o'clock, on the evening of the same day when Louis de Bouillé had the honor of being received, first by the Queen and then by the King, a scene — which we wish to assist our readers in observing — was taking place in the fourth and upper story of a small, old, dirty, gloomy house, on the Rue Juiverie.

We therefore convoy our readers to the entrance of the Pont au Change, — whether they dismount from their chariots or from cabs, whether they pay six thousand francs a year for coachman, two horses, and the carriage, or give thirty sous a day for a simple hired vehicle, with a public number.

We cross the bridge with them. We enter the Rue Pelleterie, which we follow as far as the Rue Juiverie, where we stop in front of the third door on the left.

We know very well that the appearance of that door — which the tenants of the house do not take the trouble to fasten, because they fancy their dwellings present no nocturnal temptations to the noble thieves from the Cité — is not attractive; but, as has been said, we have business with the people who inhabit the attics of this house; and as they will not come to us, why, we must go bravely to them, — dear gentleman, or well-beloved lady-reader.

Walk carefully as possible, in order not to slip in the sticky mud, which forms the soil of the narrow and dark passage-way which we enter. Let us gather our skirts

about us, in order not to let them brush the walls of the damp and greasy stairway, which crawls up from the end of that alley, like the fragments of a disjointed serpent. Let us place vials of vinegar under our nostrils, or press perfumed handkerchiefs to our faces, in order that this most subtle and aristocratic of our senses, the sense of smell, may escape, so far as possible, any contact with the ammoniated and tainted air, which penetrates mouth, nose, and eyes, all at once.

We will pause at the top of the third staircase, in front of a door on which the innocent hand of some youthful designer has traced certain outlines in chalk, which at first might be mistaken for cabalistic figures, but are only unfortunate essays in the sublime art of Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Michael Angelo.

If you please, we will look through the keyhole, in order, dear gentleman or lady, that you may recognize, if you have a good memory, the personages whom you are to encounter. If you do not recognize them at sight, you can apply your ear to the door, and listen It will be strange indeed, if hearing does not then come to the aid of sight, inasmuch as there are few of our dear readers who have not perused our story called "The Queen's Necklace." Thus it is, that our senses complement each other.

First let us ascertain what can be seen through the keyhole.

We see the interior of a miserable chamber, occupied by three persons. These three persons are a man, a woman, and a child.

The man is forty-five years old, and appears fifty-five; the woman is thirty-four, and appears forty; the child is five, and appears to be that age, for he has not yet had time to grow old too fast.

The man is clothed in an old uniform of a sergeant of the French Guards, a uniform venerated since the Fourteenth of July, the day when the French Guards united themselves with the populace, and exchanged gunshots with Lambesq's Germans and Besenval's Swiss.

This man holds in his hand a whole pack of cards, from the ace, through the deuce, and the three and four of each color, up to the king. He is trying, for the hundredth time, — for the thousandth, for the ten thousandth time, — an infallible double and progressive cubic reckoning, a scheme by which he may always break the gaming bank. By his side reposes a card pricked as full of holes as there are stars in the sky. We have said *reposes*, but we hasten to take that word back. *Repose* is not the right word to employ in reference to a card which the gamester — incontestably he is a gamester — torments incessantly, and consults every five minutes.

The woman is clad in an old silk gown. With her the misery seems more terrible, because it figures in conjunction with the remains of luxury. Her hair is done up in a pug, and held by a copper comb, which was once upon a time gilded. Her hands are scrupulously kept; and by dint of cleanliness, they have preserved, or rather have acquired, a certain aristocratic pose. Her nails, which Baron de Taverney, in his brutal realism, used to call claws, are always rounded into the chestnut shape. Finally some old-style slippers, worn out in spots, and formerly embroidered in gold and silk, give her feet free play, which are also partly covered with the remains of some clocked stockings.

As to her face, as we have before said, it belongs to a woman of thirty-four or thirty-five, and if artistically decorated, according to the mode of the day, would enable her to appear no older than she really is, or even to count

five years below her true age; for, as said the Abbé of Celle, till five or even ten years after, women cling desperately to twenty-nine. Deprived of rouge and powder, and thereby stripped of all means for concealing the effect of her sighs and unhappiness, this woman's third or fourth decade, this third or fourth flight of time, convicts her of several years beyond her proper portion.

Haggard as is this face, one dreams of having seen it before; and without the ability to answer the question, — inasmuch as the mind, however strong on the wing, hesitates to overleap such a distance, — one asks in what gilded palace, in what six-horse carriage, in the midst of what royal dust, he has before seen a resplendent face, of which this is only the faded reflection.

The child is five years old, as we have said. He has hair outspread like a cherub's, in one of Carlo Dolci's pictures. His cheeks are round as pippins. He has the demoniacal eyes of his mother, the greedy mouth of his father, and the laziness and vacillation of both.

He wears a coat of threadbare velvet; and while munching a slice of jam-covered bread, from the corner grocery, he shreds the end of an old tricolored belt, fringed with copper, into the crown of an old felt hat.

All this is lighted by a candle with a gigantic snuff, for which a bottle serves as a candlestick. This places the man with the cards in the light, and leaves the rest of the apartment in semi-darkness.

This is the situation. Now if ocular inspection has taught us nothing, let us try the aural method, as formerly proposed.

Listen! It is the child who first breaks the silence, as he tosses over his head his bread tart, which falls at the bottom of the bed, now reduced to a single mattress.

"Mamma," he says, "I 'm tired of sweetened bwead! Pouah!"

"Well, what dost want, Toussaint?"

"I want a stick of wed barley canny."

"Hearest thou, Beausire?" says the woman.

Then, noting that he is absorbed in his calculations, she asks, louder than before: "Dost thou hear what this poor child says?"

The same silence!

Then, raising her foot as high as her hand, she takes off a slipper, and throws it at the calculator's nose. "Hey, Beausire!" she cries.

"Oh well, what is it?" he asks, with a decided expression of ill-humor.

"Toussaint, here, wants a red stick of sugar candy, because he is tired of jam, poor child."

"He shall have it to-morrow."

"I want it to-day! I want it this evening! I want it wight off, now!" cries the child in a yelping tone, which threatens to breed a tempest.

"Toussaint, my dear," says the father, "I counsel thee to silence, or thou wilt have trouble with papa!"

The child yells, but the yell is drawn from him by fractiousness rather than fear.

"Touch that child a bit, drunkard, and thou 'lt have trouble with me!" says the mother, shaking at Beausire her white hand, which, thanks to the care wherewith its owner sharpens her finger-nails, looks as if it might belong to a griffin.

"Hey? Who the devil 's going to touch the young one? Thou knowest that 's only my way of talking, Madame Oliva. Even if a fellow sometimes bangs the mother's gown, he always respects the child's frock. Come, — come and embrace this poor Beausire, who in a

week will be as rich as a king. Come, come, my little Nicole!"

"When you *are* as rich as a king, my jewel, it will be quite time enough to embrace you, but till then, — not for me!"

"But when I tell thee it 's all the same as if I had a million, do give me an advance kiss, to bring us good luck. The baker will soon give us credit!"

"A man who counts upon millions, and yet asks to be trusted for a four-pound loaf!"

"Me wants some wed barley canny!" cries the younket, in a tone which is the harbinger of worse outcries to come.

"See here, millionnaire, give this baby a morsel of sugar candy!"

Beausire makes a motion of his hand towards his pouch, but it accomplishes only half the journey. "Thou well knowest that yesterday I gave thee my last twenty-four sou piece."

"Then thou hast money, mamma!" says the child, turning towards her whom the respectable Monsieur Beausire sometimes calls Oliva and sometimes Nicole. "Give me a sou to buy a stick of wed barley canny!"

"Here are two sous, thou naughty child; but take care and don't fall, going downstairs!"

"Tanks, little mother," says the child, jumping up and down for joy, and holding out his hand.

"Stop! come here, till I put on thy belt again, and thy hat, thou droll chicken; for it must not be said that Monsieur de Beausire lets his child run about the streets half rigged. It may be all one to him, for he 's a *no-heart*, but such things make *me* die of shame."

The child greatly desires, even at the risk of what the neighbors may say about the heir presumptive of the

house of Beausire, to rid himself of that hat and belt, whereof he has never been able to see the utility; although, in their freshness and glow, these articles excited the admiration of the other children; but as belt and hat are among the conditions attached to the two-sou piece, it is necessary for him to put them on, which the young tease reluctantly does. However, he consoles himself, before he goes out, by thrusting his ten-centime (or two-sou) piece under his father's nose, who, absorbed in his calculations, only smiles at this charming playfulness.

Presently they can hear his step, hastened by appetite, but still timorous, receding down the stairway.

The woman shuts the door, after following the urchin out with her eyes, and turns her attention from son to father. After a brief silence she says: "Ah ha, Monsieur de Beausire, your intelligence had better do something forthwith to get us out of this miserable hole; or else I must see what *I* can do;" and she pronounces these words in a mincing way, as a woman might, whose mirror declares to her of a morning: "Be calm! With such a face as yours, no woman need die of hunger."

"Presently, my little Nicole! Thou seest that I 'm busy."

"Yes, in changing those cards about, and in pricking holes in a piece of cardboard."

"But when I tell thee what I 've discovered —"

"What?"

"My combination."

"Good! So we begin all over again. Beausire, I give you fair warning, that I shall send my memory rummaging among my old acquaintances, and see if I can't think of one of them who 's able to send such a looney as you to the Charenton Asylum."

"But don't I tell thee this combination is infallible?"

"Ah, if Marshal Richelieu was n't dead!" mutters the young woman to herself.

"What sayest thou?"

"Or if Cardinal Rohan was n't ruined!"

"Hey?"

"Or if Madame de la Motte had n't run away!"

"What art thou saying, please?"

"If I could only recover some of my old friends, and not be obliged to share the misery of an old cavalry man like this!" and with a gesture fit for a queen, Mademoiselle Nicole Legay — now called Madame Oliva — contemptuously indicates Beausire.

"But I tell thee," he repeats, with an air of conviction, "that to-morrow we shall be rich!"

"With millions?"

"Yes, millions!"

"Show me the first ten golden louis out of your millions, and I 'll take the rest for granted."

"Very well, thou shalt see them this very night, — ten golden louis. That 's just the sum promised me!"

"And thou 'lt give them to me, my little Beausire?" says Nicole, quickly.

"Well, I 'll give thee five, to buy a silk gown for thyself, and velvet frock for the little one. Then, with the other five —"

"Well, well, with the other five —?"

"I will bring thee a million!"

"Wretch, — again gambling!"

"But I tell thee I 've found the infallible combination at last!"

"Oh yes, twin sister to that other combination, which ate up the sixty thousand francs coming to thee after that Portuguese affair."

"Ill-gotten wealth never does any good!" says Beausire, sententiously; "and I always had a notion, that the way in which that money came to us was sure to bring bad luck."

"I suppose the ten louis talked about come by inheritance? Perhaps some uncle has died in America or India, and bequeathed ten louis —"

"These ten louis," rejoins Beausire, with an air of superiority, "these ten louis, Mademoiselle Nicole Legay, — yes, these ten louis, understand, — were earned, not only honestly, but honorably, and in a cause wherein I find myself much interested, like all the nobility of France."

"You are then a *nobleman*, Monsieur Beausire?" says Nicole, maliciously.

"Mademoiselle Legay, say De Beausire, — *De Beausire*," he reiterates, "as it is recorded in the certificate of the birth of your child, registered in the sacristy of Saint Paul's Church, and signed by your servant, — Jean Baptiste Toussaint de Beausire, on the very day when I gave him my name —"

"A great gift, that!" mutters Nicole.

"— And my fortune!" adds Beausire, emphatically.

"If the good God never sends him anything else," she says, shaking her head, "the poor little chap is likely to live on charity and die in an almshouse."

"Well now," he says, with an air of vexation, "one can't stand this! Thou art never contented!"

"Then don't stand it!" cries Nicole, opening the floodgates of her long-restrained wrath. "Good God, who wants you to stand it? Thank God, I 'm not worried on my own account, nor on my child's. Beginning to-night, I also will look for fortune, — but elsewhere."

Nicole arose and took three steps towards the door.

Beausire placed himself before the door, barring the way with outstretched arms, and saying: "But when I tell thee, naughty girl, that this fortune — "

"Well, well?"

"It will come this evening. Even if the combination is wrong, — which it cannot be, after all my calculations, there will only be five louis lost!"

"There are times when five louis are a fortune, — a fortune, do you hear, Monsieur Spendthrift? You don't know that, oh no! — you who 've eaten your gold by the houseful!"

"That proves my merit, Nicole. If I used up that gold, it was I who earned it; and if I won that money, I can win more elsewhere. There 's a benevolent Providence for such fellows as I, — if they 're only *adroit*."

"Oh yes, count on that!"

"Mademoiselle Nicole," said Beausire, "art thou an atheist?"

She shrugged her shoulders.

"Dost thou belong to the school of Voltaire, who denies Providence?"

"Beausire, you 're a fool!"

"Coming from among the common people, as thou dost, it would not be astonishing, thy holding such notions. I warn thee, they are not the sort belonging to my social caste, or in harmony with my political opinions."

"You 're insolent, Monsieur!" said Nicole.

"As for me, — dost hear, — as for me, I have *faith;* and if anybody should say to me: 'Thy son, Jean Baptiste Toussaint de Beausire, who has gone out for a stick of red barley candy, with a two-sou piece, will come up again with a purse full of gold in his hand; I should reply: 'Very likely, if it is God's will!'" and Beausire lifted his eyes beatifically to Heaven.

"Beausire, you 're an idiot!"

She had hardly uttered these words when they heard the voice of young Toussaint, calling up the stairway: "Papa! Mamma!"

Both Beausire and Nicole hearkened to the voice of their pet.

"Papa! Mamma!" repeated that voice, coming nearer and nearer.

"What has happened?" cried Nicole, opening the door with maternal solicitude. "Come, my child, come!"

"Papa! Mamma!" continued the approaching voice, like that of a ventriloquist, when he pretends to imitate the sound of speech, heard through an opening cellar door.

"I should not be surprised," said Beausire, noting an element of joy in that voice, "if the miracle had come to pass, and the little chap had found the purse of which I spoke just now."

At that moment the urchin appeared on the last turn of the stairway, and ran into the chamber, holding in his mouth his stick of barley candy, squeezing a bag of sweetmeats against his breast with his left arm, and displaying in his outstretched right hand a golden louis, which, by the light of the lone candle, shone like the star Aldebaran.

"My God, my God!" cried Nicole, leaving the door to shut of its own accord. "What has happened to the poor dear!" and she covered the sticky mouth with maternal kisses, which nothing can disgust, because they purify everything they touch.

"Here it is," said the father, adroitly scooping in the louis, and examining it by the candle, "here it is, a genuine gold louis, worth twenty-four francs."

"Where hast thou found it, little monkey? I must go there, and search for others like it."

"I did n't fine it, papa! Somebody give it to me!"

"How? Somebody gave it to thee?" cried the mother.

"Yes, mamma, — a gentleman."

Nicole was on the point of asking, as Beausire had asked about the louis, where the gentleman was; but, rendered prudent by experience, and knowing Beausire's jealous susceptibility, she contented herself with repeating: "A gentleman?"

"Yes, little mother," said the child, cracking his red candy between his teeth, "a gentleman."

"A gentleman?" repeated Beausire, in his turn.

"Yes, little papa, a gentleman, who came into the gwocery while I was there, and says: 'Monsieur Gwocer, is n't this young gentleman named *De Beausire*, whom you have the honor of serving?'"

Beausire drew himself up, and Nicole shrugged her shoulders.

"What did the grocer say, my son?" asked Beausire.

"He says: 'I don't know about no gentleman, but his name is Beausire, certainly.' — 'And don't he live nearby?' asks the gentleman. — 'There, in the house at the left, up thwee flights.' — 'Give all sorts of goodies to this child, and I 'll pay,' says the gentleman. Then he says to me: 'Here, pet, there 's a louis;' and he also says: 'That 's to buy other bonbons, when these are all eaten up.' Then he puts this louis into my hand, the gwocer puts the package on my arm, and I come away happy. — Hold on! Where 's my louis?" and the child, who had not observed his father's legerdemain, began to hunt about for the goldpiece.

"Thou hast lost it, careless child!" said Beausire.

"No! no! no!" cried the boy.

The discussion might have become serious, but for what followed, which necessarily put an end to it.

While the child, doubtful about the matter, was hunting around the floor after the goldpiece, which reposed quietly in the deep pocket of papa's waistcoat; while papa was admiring the intelligence of young Toussaint, as shown in the story he had brought home, — though that story has perhaps been a trifle clarified under our pen; while Nicole, though sharing the enthusiasm of her lover for this precocious eloquence, was asking herself seriously who this giver of sweetmeats, this louis-lender, could be, — the door opened slowly, and a pleasant voice uttered these words: "Good-evening, Mademoiselle Nicole! Good-evening, Monsieur de Beausire! Good-evening, little Toussaint!"

Each of the three turned towards the side whence came the voice.

On the threshold stood a man elegantly dressed, and gazing with a smiling face at the family group.

"Ah!" cried the youngster, "the bonbon gentleman!"

"Cagliostro!" exclaimed Nicole and Beausire in a breath.

"You have a charming child, Monsieur," said the Count, "and you ought to be very proud of being his father."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

IN WHICH THE READER WILL HAVE THE PLEASURE OF FINDING M. DE BEAUSIRE THE SAME MAN HE WAS WHEN THEY LEFT HIM.

THERE was a moment's pause after Cagliostro's gracious words. He came into the middle of the chamber, and glanced inquiringly about, doubtless wishing to inform himself as to the moral, and especially the pecuniary situation, of his old acquaintances, into whose midst he had unexpectedly come, led by the terrible underground intrigues of which he was the centre.

The result of this glance left no doubt in such a perspicacious mind as the Count's. Even a superficial observer might have guessed the truth, that the poverty-stricken household had reached its last twenty-four sous.

Of the three persons into whose midst the apparition of the Count had brought such consternation, the first to break silence was little Toussaint, whose memory only recalled the events of that evening, and whose conscience therefore did not reproach him. "Ah Monsieur," he said, "ain't it too bad? I've lost my goldpiece."

Nicole opened her mouth to state the facts as they were, but she reflected that possibly her silence might procure her child a second louis, and that this second *she* should inherit; and she was not mistaken.

"Thou hast lost thy goldpiece, poor child?" said Cagliostro. "Never mind! Here are two. Take care not to lose them this time!"

Taking two golden louis from a purse, whose plumpness attracted the covetous attention of Beausire, he let them fall into the tight little hand of the child, who said, running to Nicole, "Here, mamma, here 's one for thee and one for me," as he divided his treasure with his mother.

Cagliostro noted the tenacity with which the spurious sergeant's glance followed his purse in its various evolutions, from the time when he took it out, and it was opened in giving passage to forty-eight francs, till it was returned to his pocket again. Seeing it disappear in the depths of the Count's vest, Nicole's sweetheart sighed.

"What, Monsieur, always melancholy?" said Cagliostro.

"And you, Monsieur, always the millionnaire!"

"My God! — You, who are one of the greatest philosophers I ever heard of, either in these degenerate later ages, or in the cycles of classic antiquity, — you ought to be acquainted with the time-honored maxim, *Money makes not happiness.* I have known you when you were comparatively rich."

"Yes, that 's true. I had nearly one hundred thousand francs," said Beausire.

"That 's possible; but at the time when I knew you, you had already eaten up some forty thousand francs; though if you had only sixty thousand left, that would be a good round sum for an old soldier."

Beausire sighed again. "What is sixty thousand francs, compared with the money at *your* disposal?"

"In my capacity as trustee, you are perhaps correct; but if we reckon more carefully, I fancy you would be Saint Martin, and I the pauper; and to keep me from freezing with the cold, my dear Beausire, you would have to give me half of your cloak. Do you remember the circumstances under which I first met you? You had then,

as I just said, about sixty thousand francs in your pocket; but were you any happier?"

Beausire emitted a sad retrospective sigh, which was almost a groan.

"You see!" insisted Cagliostro. "Now would you give up your present condition, even if you possessed nothing but the unlucky louis which you confiscated from young Toussaint — ?"

"Monsieur!" interrupted the old soldier.

"We won't quarrel now, Beausire! We quarrelled once, and you will remember that you were compelled to go into the street to find your sword, which had jumped out of the window? You recollect it, don't you?" he continued, as Beausire made no response. "It is something worth remembering. Well, now I ask again, even though you possessed only the one unlucky louis which you confiscated from young Toussaint," — and this time the insinuation passed unnoticed, — "would you exchange your actual position for the much more precarious situation from which I once helped to extricate you?"

"No, Monsieur," said Beausire, "you are right indeed! I would not make the exchange. Alas, I was separated from my dear Nicole!"

"Yes, and somewhat sought after by the police, on account of a certain affair in Portugal. What the Devil ever came of that affair? A most villainous affair, as I remember!"

"Oh well, it is drowned in oblivion."

"So much the better, for it must have annoyed you very much. But don't reckon too surely on this falling into oblivion. They are great divers, these police, and if the net goes as deep as the water, a scandalous crime is easier to fish up than a beautiful pearl."

"But for the misery to which we are reduced, Monsieur, —"

"You would be happy. Indeed, you would only need a thousand louis to make that happiness complete."

Nicole's eyes lighted up, and Beausire's were flaming.

"That is to say," cried Beausire, "if we had a thousand louis, — that is, twenty-four thousand francs, we should buy some country-place with half the amount, get a little income from the other half, and I should become a cultivator."

"Like Cincinnatus!"

"This would leave Nicole free to conduct the education of our child."

"Like Cornelia! — Well, not only would your conduct be exemplary, but touching. You hope then to get this amount out of the business which you are engaged in just now?"

Beausire started. "What business?"

"That in which you figure as a sergeant of the Guards, — that for which you have a rendezvous to-night, under the arcades of Royal Square."

Beausire became pale as death. "Oh Monsieur?" he said, clasping his hands beseechingly.

"What is it?"

"Don't give me away!"

"Bah! How you wander! Am I a lieutenant of police?"

"There, I told thee so," said Nicole, — "that this was some wretched affair."

"Ah, you knew about it, this affair, Mademoiselle Legay?" asked Cagliostro.

"No, Monsieur," said she, "and for that very reason I suspected him. When he hides an affair from me, that 's because it 's bad, — I make sure of that."

"But as to this affair, which now concerns him, you

may be mistaken. It may be an excellent affair, on the contrary."

"Is it not?" cried Beausire. "The Count is a gentleman, and understands that all the nobility are interested —"

"In its success!" replied Cagliostro. "It is however true that the common people, on their side, are interested to have it fail. Meantime, if you will believe me, my dear Beausire, — and you understand, it is the counsel of a friend which I give, of a true friend! — well, if you will believe me, you will take part neither with the nobility nor with the people."

"But whose part shall I take?"

"Your own!"

"Mine?"

"To be sure!" said Nicole. "Pardieu! Thou hast done enough for other folks. It 's time to think of thyself!"

"You hear? She speaks like Saint Chrysostom, — John of the Golden Mouth. Remember this, Beausire, that everything has a good side and a bad side, — good for some, bad for others. No affair, whatever it may be, is bad for everybody or good for everybody. Well, the one thing needful is to get on the right side."

"Ah ha! and it appears that I am not on that side, hey?"

"Not at all, dear Beausire! No, that does n't follow. I will only add, — you know I meddle with matters to play the prophet, — I will only add, that if you are mixed up in this affair, it will not be at the risk of your honor, or even of your fortune, but you will run the risk of your life. Yes, you will probably be hanged."

"But, Monsieur," said Beausire, trying to keep his countenance, but wiping away the sweat which rolled down his forehead, "they do not hang a gentleman."

"That 's true ; but in order to obtain the privilege of decapitation, it would be necessary to produce your proofs of nobility, which would perhaps take so long as to weary the judges, who would therefore ordain that you should be provisionally hanged. You will tell me that in a good cause the punishment matters nothing, that

Crime makes the shame, and not the scaffold,

as a great poet has said."

"Well then!" stammered Beausire, more and more frightened.

"Oh well, you are not so much attached to your opinions that you wish to sacrifice your life, — I understand that. The Devil! 'One can live but once!' as another poet says, — not so great as the first, perhaps, but one who at least has reason on his side."

"I have always noticed," said Beausire at last, "in all the relations in which I have had the honor to be associated with you, that you have a way of talking which would make the hair of even a moderately timid man stand on end."

"Oh, the Devil, such was not my intention," said Cagliostro. "Besides, you are not a timid man!"

"No," responded Beausire, "not generally! However, there are certain circumstances —"

"Oh yes, I understand! — for instance, when one has behind him the galleys, for theft, and before him the gallows, for the crime of treason against the people, — *lèse-nation*, — as the offence would now be called, I suppose, which has for its aim the abduction of the King."

"Monsieur!" cried Beausire, utterly confounded.

"You unlucky dog!" said Oliva. "Then it was on this kidnapping business that you based your dreams of gold?"

"And he was not entirely in the wrong, my dear Demoiselle; only, as I said just now, there is a bad and good side to everything, a bright face and a cloudy face. Beausire has had the misfortune to caress the shady face, to adopt the bad side; but if he will turn about —"

"Is n't it too late?" asked Nicole.

"Certainly not!"

"What shall I do?" asked Beausire.

"Suppose one thing," said Cagliostro, thoughtfully.

"Well, what?"

"Suppose your plot should fail. Suppose those two accomplices, the man in the brown cloak and the man with a mask, should be arrested. Suppose — it is necessary to suppose all sorts of things nowadays — suppose they should be condemned to death. Augeard and Besenval were acquitted, to be sure; but suppose that these accomplices should be condemned to death. Suppose, — don't be in a hurry, for by supposition after supposition we get at the facts, — suppose you should be regarded as one of their accomplices. Suppose the cord was around your neck, and somebody should say to you, in answer to your complaints, — for in such a situation, however courageous he may be, — great Heavens! — a man must lament more or less —"

"Go on, go on, Count, I beg of you. It seems as if I were already strangling."

"Pardieu, that 's not surprising, seeing that I was theorizing about the cord at your throat! Well, suppose somebody, a Voice, should come to you and say: 'Poor Beausire, dear Monsieur, this is all your own fault!'"

"How so?" cried Beausire.

"There, you see! By theories upon theories we get at the facts; and you answer me as if we had already touched bottom."

"I own up!"

"Very well. 'How so?' you would say to the Voice; and the Voice would reply: 'Because you might not only escape this malefactor's doom, which already holds you in its talons, but gain a thousand louis, wherewith to buy that little house in the country, with green hedges, whither you wish to retire with Mademoiselle Oliva and little Toussaint, and five hundred francs a year income, coming to you from the twelve thousand francs which had not been used in buying the place, — to live, as you said, as a gardener, going about in slippers in summer time and brogans in winter. Now, instead of this charming prospect, we have — *you* particularly — before our eyes the Place de Grève, planted with two or three villainous gallows-posts, of which the highest offers you its arm. Ugh! An ugly outlook, my poor Monsieur de Beausire!'"

"But after all, Count, how can I manage to escape, — how gain the thousand louis necessary to assure my tranquillity, and also that of Nicole and Toussaint?"

"You are always asking something! Well, the Voice might reply: 'Nothing easier. You have there, very near you, only two steps away, the Count Cagliostro.' — 'I know him,' you would reply, — 'a foreign nobleman, who lives in Paris for his pleasure, and who is bored almost to death unless he has plenty of news.' — 'That 's the man,' the Voice would say. 'Well, you have only to hunt him up, and say to him —'"

"But I don't know where he lives!" cried Beausire. "I don't know if he is still in Paris. I don't even know if he 's still alive."

"To which, dear Beausire, the Voice would respond, that this was precisely why the Count had come to find you; and the moment he found you, there would remain

to you no convenient excuse. Well, you would then say to him: 'Monsieur, I know you for an epicure in the matter of news. Now I have the very latest. *Monsieur*, the King's brother, is engaged in a conspiracy.' — 'Bah!' would be his reply. — 'Yes, with the Marquis de Favras.' — 'Impossible!' — 'Yes indeed! I speak wittingly, because I am one of the agents of Favras.' — 'Truly? Well, what is the aim of this plot?' — 'The abduction of the King and his removal to Péronne. Well, Count, for your recreation, if you so desire, I will bring you, hour by hour, — minute by minute, if necessary, — intelligence as to how the affair goes on.' Then the Count, who is a generous seigneur, would reply: 'Will you really do this, Beausire?' — 'Yes indeed!' — 'Well, as every effort deserves its reward, if you keep your word, why, I have there, in a corner, twenty-four thousand francs, which I mean to use in some good way. My faith, why not spend them on my caprice? Now on the day when the King is abducted, or Favras taken, if you come and tell me so, on the honor of a gentleman, the twenty-four thousand livres shall be yours, as shall be these ten louis, — not as an advance, not even as a loan, but simply as a gift.'"

At these words, like an actor who rehearses with all the accessories, Cagliostro drew from his pouch his heavy purse, introduced into it his thumb and finger, and with a dexterity which testified to his familiarity with that species of exercise, he pinched up just ten louis, no more and no less; while it is but fair to say, on his side, that Beausire put forth his hand to receive them.

Cagliostro pushed this hand gently aside, saying: "Excuse me, but we were only dealing in *suppositions*, I believe!"

"Yes, but," said Beausire whose eyes gleamed like live

coals, "as you said, by the way of theories and suppositions we reach facts."

"Have we reached that point?"

Beausire hesitated. We hasten to say that the cause of this hesitation was not honesty, was not fidelity to his pledges, was not an elevated conscience. We affirm, what our readers know Beausire too well to contradict, that the cause of his hesitation was merely the fear lest the Count should not keep his promise.

"My dear Beausire," said Cagliostro, "I well know what is passing through your mind."

"Yes, you are right! I hesitate about betraying the trust reposed in me by a gallant man;" and he lifted his eyes to Heaven, and shook his head, as much as to say, "How hard this is!"

"No, that is not so," replied Cagliostro; "and you are a new illustration of the truth of that wise saw, *No man knows himself.*"

"What then?" demanded Beausire, flurried by the Count's facility in reading the bottom of his heart.

"You fear that I will not keep my promise about giving you the thousand louis."

"Oh Monsieur! —"

"That is but natural. Well, I offer you a guaranty."

"A guaranty! Monsieur has no need —"

"A guaranty which will personally answer for me."

"And what is this security?" asked Beausire, timidly.

"Mademoiselle Nicole Oliva Legay."

"Oh, if the Count promises, the thing is as good as done!" cried Nicole.

"You see, Monsieur, here is the evidence that I scrupulously fulfil my agreements. Once upon a time Mademoiselle was in the same situation that you are now, minus the conspiracy; that is, she was sought by the

police. I made her an offer, — to make her retreat at my house. She feared for her honor. I gave her my word; and in spite of all the temptations which beset me, — and which you, Beausire, understand better than anybody else, — I kept my word. — Is n't this so, my dear Mademoiselle?"

"Oh yes! By our little Toussaint, I swear it!"

"You believe, then, Mademoiselle Nicole, that I will keep my word, if to-day I engage to give him twenty-four thousand livres on the day when the King takes his flight, or Favras is arrested? And this does n't take into the account, be it understood, that I also loosen the knot which threatens to strangle you at any moment, — so that there will be no further question of rope or gallows, — at any rate, as connected with this affair. Of course I cannot be responsible beyond that. — One moment! Let us understand each other. There are some vocations — "

"As for me," said Nicole, "it is all the same as if a notary had passed the contracts."

"Well, my dear Mademoiselle," said Cagliostro, placing in a row on the table the ten louis, which he had heretofore kept in his hand, "inspire the heart of Monsieur de Beausire with this conviction, and the affair is concluded;" and he made a sign with his hand for Beausire to go and talk with Nicole alone.

The conversation only lasted five minutes; but it must be said that during those five minutes it was very animated.

Meanwhile Cagliostro looked at the card full of holes, which he held up before the candle, nodding to it as if he was saluting an old acquaintance.

"Ah ha!" he said. "This is the famous combination of Monsieur Law, which you have picked up. I lost a

million on that very combination;" and he carelessly dropped the card on the table.

This observation imparted new activity to the conversation of Nicole and Beausire. At last Beausire appeared to have made up his mind. He came to Cagliostro with outstretched hand, like a jockey who wishes to conclude a good trade; but the Count drew back and frowned.

"Monsieur, between gentlemen, the word is sufficient. You have mine; give me yours!"

"On the faith of a Beausire, it is agreed."

"That is enough," said Cagliostro. Then he added, drawing from his fob a watch, on which was a picture of King Frederic of Prussia, enriched with diamonds: "It is nine o'clock, less a quarter-hour. At nine o'clock precisely you will be waited for under the arcades on Place Royale, on the side of the Hôtel Sully. Take these ten louis and put them in your waistcoat pocket, buckle on your coat, gird on your sword, cross Notre Dame Bridge, follow the Rue Saint Antoine. No need for anybody to go with you."

Beausire did not need speaking to a second time. He took the ten louis, put them into his pocket, buckled on his coat, and belted on his sword.

"Where shall I see you again, Count?"

"In Saint John Cemetery, if you please. When one wishes not to be overheard, and to talk over such affairs as this, better be among the dead than among the living."

"At what hour?"

"As soon as you are at liberty. The first comer will wait for the other."

"Monsieur has something more to do?" asked Beausire anxiously, seeing that the Count did not get ready to follow him out.

"Yes, I wish to chat with Mademoiselle Nicole."

Beausire made a sharp gesture.

"Oh, be easy, my friend. I respected her honor when she was a young girl; all the more reason why I should respect her as the mother of a family. Go along, Beausire, go along!"

Beausire glanced at his Nicole, as much as to say: "Madame de Beausire, be worthy of the confidence I repose in you!" Tenderly he embraced the young Toussaint, saluted the Count with respect mingled with some distrust, and went out precisely as the clock on Notre Dame rang out the three-quarters past eight.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ŒDIPUS AND LOT.

It lacked but a few minutes of midnight when a man, emerging from the Rue Royale into the Rue Saint Antoine, followed the latter street as far as Saint Catherine's Fountain, and paused a moment within its projecting shadow, to assure himself that he was not shadowed by some spy. Thence he took the lane which leads to the Hôtel St. Paul, whence he entered the very dark and utterly deserted Rue du Roi-de-Sicile. Then, somewhat relaxing his gait, he advanced towards the extremity of this street, and hesitatingly turned into the Rue de la Croix-Blanche, and finally stopped, but still more hesitatingly before the grated gate of Saint John Cemetery.

There he waited, as if he feared he should see some spectre rise out of the earth, and wiped the sweat from his face with the sleeve of his sergeant's coat.

At the very moment when midnight sounded, something like a ghost appeared, gliding among the yews and cypresses. This ghost approached the gate; and soon, by the noise of the key in the lock, one could see that the spectre, if spectre it was, not only possessed the faculty of coming out of his tomb, but, when he was once outside the grave, of going also outside the cemetery.

At this clanking sound our military friend recoiled.

"Well, well, Beausire," said the hectoring voice of Cagliostro, "don't you know me, or have you forgotten our appointment?"

"Ah, is it you?" said Beausire, breathing like a man from whose heart a great weight has been lifted. "So much the better. These devilish streets are so dark and lonesome that one does n't know whether he would rather find his way alone, or meet somebody."

"Ah, bah!" said Cagliostro. "What, you afraid of anything, at any hour of day or night? You would n't have me credit that, — a brave man like you, who wears a sword at his side! Come this side of the gate, dear Beausire, and you 'll feel easier, for you 'll only encounter myself."

Beausire accepted the bidding, and the lock, which had grated in opening the gate for him, grated again as it was fastened behind him.

"There now," said Cagliostro, "follow this little pathway, dear Monsieur, and, at the end of twenty paces, we shall find a sort of ruined altar, the steps whereof will be marvellously convenient for a chat over our affairs."

Beausire started to obey his leader; but presently he said, after a moment's hesitation: "Where the devil are you going? I can see only briers which scratch me like nails, and grass which comes up to my knees."

"The truth is, that this cemetery is one of the worst kept that I know of; but that is not astonishing. You know hardly anybody is buried here except condemned sinners, who have been executed in the Place de Grève; and for such poor devils, they use small ceremony. Nevertheless, there are several illustrious people buried here. If it were daytime I could show you the place where Bouteville de Montmorency is buried, who was beheaded for fighting a duel; and the Chevalier de Rohan, decapitated for conspiring against the government; and Count Horn, broken on the wheel for assassinating a Jew; and Damiens, quartered for trying to kill Louis Fifteenth, —

and I don't know who else. Oh, you 're wrong to traduce Saint John Cemetery. It 's badly kept, but very well inhabited."

Beausire followed on, fitting his step to Cagliostro's, as regularly as a soldier, in the second rank, is in the habit of doing with his file-leader.

"Ah!" said the leader, suddenly stopping, in such a way that Beausire, who expected no such halt, ran into Cagliostro's back. "Hold, here 's something new. This is the grave of your comrade, Fleur d'Épine, one of the murderers of François the baker. Épine was hanged a week ago, by order of the Châtelet Court. This ought to interest you, as he was an old exempt soldier, like yourself, a genuine recruiter and a sergeant."

Beausire's teeth literally chattered. It seemed as if the thorns, amidst which he was walking, were so many clinched hands, stretching out of the earth to draw him down by his legs, and make him understand that Destiny had there marked a place for his eternal sleep.

"Ah!" said Cagliostro, stopping before a sort of ruin, "here we are, at last!"

Seating himself on a broken stone, he pointed Beausire to another, which seemed placed side by side with the first, expressly to spare Cinna the pains of bringing his seat nearer that of Augustus. It was time, for the legs of the ex-soldier were shaking in such a way that he fell, rather than sat, down upon the stone.

"Now that we can talk at our ease," said Cagliostro, "let us hear what took place under the arcades of Place Royale. The meeting must have been interesting."

"My faith, I must acknowledge that just now my head spins, and I think we shall both be the gainers if you will please question me."

"So be it! I 'm a good-natured prince; and if I can

only learn what I want, never mind the form. How many were there under the arcades in Place Royale?"

"Six, including me."

"Six, including yourself? Well, let us see if they were indeed the men I think. Imprimis, yourself, beyond a doubt."

Beausire sighed, as much as to say that he should be glad if the doubt were possible.

"You do me the honor to begin with me," he said, "but there were much greater personages with me."

"My dear boy, I follow the precept of the Gospel, which declares that the first shall be last. Now if the first are to be last, the last naturally will be first. I proceed, as I tell you, according to the Gospel. First, you *were* there, were you not?"

"Yes!" said Beausire.

"Then there was your friend Tourcaty, — an old recruiting officer, intrusted with raising the legion for Brabant."

"Yes, Tourcaty was there."

"Then there was a good Royalist named Marquié, formerly a sergeant in the French Guards, but now a sub-lieutenant of a central company."

"Yes, Marquié was there."

"Next, Monsieur de Favras?"

"Yes, Favras comes next."

"Next, the masked man?"

"Next, the masked man!"

"Have you any information to give me about that masked man, Beausire?"

He looked at Cagliostro so intently that his eyes seemed to illuminate the obscurity. "Well," he finally began, "is he not —?" and then Beausire stopped, as if he feared he should commit a sacrilege by going so far.

"Is he not who?" demanded Cagliostro.

"Is he not —?"

"So! Your tongue is evidently tied, my dear Beausire. You must pay attention to that. Knots in the tongue sometimes bring on knots in the throat; and those, though movable, are not the less dangerous."

Forced from his last intrenchment Beausire finally replied: "Is he not *Monsieur?*"

"Monsieur who?"

"*Monsieur*, — *Monsieur*, the King's brother."

"My dear Beausire, it is quite conceivable that the Marquis de Favras should represent this masked man to be Monsieur de Provence, because Favras has an interest in having it believed that he is supported by the hand of a Prince of the blood royal; and a man who does not know how to lie, does not how to conspire; but that you and your friend Tourcaty, two old recruiters, should let yourselves be imposed upon in this sort of way, is hardly probable, — you, who are accustomed to taking the measure of people about them by feet and inches."

"What then?"

"*Monsieur* is five feet, three inches, and a fraction in height," Cagliostro went on, "while the masked man is nearly five feet and six inches."

"That is true, and I had already thought of it; but if not *Monsieur*, who then can it be?"

"Ah Beausire, I am proud and happy at my ability to teach you something, when I expected only to learn something from you."

"Then," said the ex-soldier, returning little by little to his natural condition, as he realized that he was dealing with realities, "then you know who this man is?"

"Perhaps!"

"Would it be indiscreet to ask —?"

"His name?"

Beausire bowed, to show that this was what he wanted.

"A name is always a ticklish thing to speak, Monsieur, and really, I should like it better if you would guess."

"Guess? I have been trying to, for a fortnight."

"Ah! because nobody aided you!"

"Please aid me yourself, Monsieur Count."

"I ask nothing better. Do you know the history of Œdipus?"

"Hardly. I saw it played once at the Comédie Française, but towards the end of the fourth act I had the misfortune to get drowsy."

"Pest! I wish you many such misfortunes, my dear fellow."

"But you see that just now it leaves me ignorant —"

"Well, in two words I will tell you about Œdipus. I was acquainted with him as a child at the Court of King Polybius, and as an old man at the Court of King Admetus; so you can believe what I tell you, better than you can believe what is said by Æschylus, Sophocles, Seneca, Corneille, Voltaire, or Monsieur Ducis, who have heard a great deal about Œdipus, but never enjoyed the advantage of his acquaintance."

Beausire made a movement, as if to ask Cagliostro for some explanation of this strange pretence of having known a man who had been dead thirty-six hundred years; but thinking that it was hardly the thing to interrupt the narrator for such a trifle, he checked himself, and made a sign, as much as to say: "Keep on; I am all attention;" and as a matter of fact Cagliostro did keep on.

"Well, I knew Œdipus. It had been predicted that he would be the murderer of his father and the husband of his mother; so believing Polybius to be his father, he left the old man's Court without saying good-bye, and

started for Phocis. At the time of his departure I advised his taking a mountain road which I was acquainted with, instead of travelling by the usual road from Daulis to Delphi; but he was pig-headed, and as I could not tell him why I so advised, all my exhortations to change his route were useless. At the branching of the road from Delphi to Thebes, he encountered a man followed by five slaves. This man was mounted in a chariot, and the chariot took up the whole road. All would have been easily adjusted, if the man in the chariot would have consented to move a little to the left, and Œdipus a little to the right; but each wanted to keep in the middle of the highway. The man in the chariot had a choleric temperament, and Œdipus was not naturally patient. The five slaves threw themselves upon Œdipus, one after the other, in front of their master; and one after the other was tumbled over, till at last their master was slain in his turn. Œdipus marched over six corpses, and among them was the man who was really his father; so part of the oracle was fulfilled."

"The Devil," said Beausire.

"Then Œdipus resumed his journey towards Thebes. On the road rises Mount Phocion; and in a pathway, even narrower than that where Œdipus slew his father, a singular animal had his cavern. This animal had wings like an eagle's, body and claws like a lion's, and breasts and head like a woman's."

"Oh Monsieur," said Beausire, "can you believe that such a monster ever existed?"

"I cannot so affirm," replied Cagliostro, gravely, "for when I passed over this road, — a thousand years afterwards, in the time of Epaminondas, — the Sphinx was dead. However, he was living in the Œdipus epoch, and had a mania for stationing himself in the road, proposing

a conundrum to travellers, and devouring them if they could n't guess it. As he kept this up for over three centuries, travellers became more and more scarce, and the Sphinx's teeth very long. When he saw Œdipus coming, the Sphinx placed himself in the middle of the road, and lifted one paw as a sign for the young fellow to stop. 'Traveller,' said he, 'I 'm the Sphinx.' — 'What then?' said Œdipus. — 'Well, Destiny has placed me on the earth to propose an enigma to mortals. If they can't solve it, they belong to me. If one should guess it, why I should belong to Death, and of my own accord I should throw myself into yon abyss, where at present I throw the corpses of all those who have the misfortune to come my way.' Œdipus looked over the precipice, and there saw the bleaching bones. 'Very well,' said the young fellow, 'what is the riddle?' — 'This is the riddle,' said the lion-bird: 'What is the animal who goes on four paws in the morning, two at noon, and three at night?' Œdipus reflected an instant and then said, with a smile which did not make the Sphinx altogether comfortable: 'And if I guess it, thou will throw thyself into yon abyss?' — 'Such is the law,' responded the Sphinx. — 'Well, that animal is *man!*' replied Œdipus."

"How, *man?*" interrupted Beausire, who was as much interested in the story as if it concerned his Parisian contemporaries.

"Yes, *man*. In infancy — that is, in the morning of life — he creeps on both hands and feet. In adult age — that is, at midday — he walks properly on his two feet. In the evening — that is, in old age — he leans on a cane."

"Mordieu, that 's true!" said Beausire. "That staggered the Sphinx!"

"Yes, my dear fellow, staggered him so that he precipitated himself head first into the ravine; and as he

was too honorable to save himself with his wings, which *you* will doubtless think proves him an idiot, he broke his head on the rocks. As to Œdipus, he went on his way, arrived at Thebes, found Jocasta a widow (of the man he had killed at the cross-roads) and married her, thus accomplishing both prophecies, as to killing his father and wedding with his mother."

"But after all, what analogy do you find between the history of Œdipus and the man with the mask?"

"A great analogy. Listen! To begin with, you want his name."

"Yes."

"And I propose to you a conundrum. True, I am of better stuff than the Sphinx, and I won't eat you alive if you can't guess it. Attention! I raise my paw. What young lord is the grandson of his father, the brother of his mother, and the uncle of his sisters?"

"The Devil!" said Beausire, falling into a revery not less profound than that of Œdipus.

"Think it out, my dear fellow!"

"Help me a little, Count."

"Willingly. I asked if you knew the history of Œdipus."

"You did me that honor."

"Well, now we 'll pass from profane history to sacred. Do you know the anecdote about the Patriarch Lot?"

"With his two daughters?"

"Precisely."

"Of course I know it," said Beausire; "but — wait a minute — Hey! — yes — what used to be said about old King Louis Fifteenth and his daughter, Madame Adelaide?"

"You are near enough to burn, my dear man."

"Then the man with the mask must be — "

"Five feet and six inches tall."

"Count Louis —!"

"That will do!"

"Count Louis de —"

"Hush!"

"But as you said there was nobody here but dead folks —"

"Yes, but grass sprouts over their graves, and grows faster there than anywhere else. Well, these weeds, like the weeds of King Midas, — do you know the story of King Midas?"

"No, Monsieur!"

"I will tell it you some other time. For the nonce, let us return to our own muttons."

Then he resumed, more seriously: "You were saying, Beausire?"

"Excuse me, Monsieur, but I believe *you* were asking certain questions."

"You are right;" and thereupon Cagliostro mentally pondered his catechism.

"On my word, that is true," muttered Beausire. "His father's grandson, his mother's brother, and his sisters' uncle! That is Louis de Nar —!"

"Attention!" said Cagliostro.

Beausire interrupted his monologue, and listened with all his ears.

"Meanwhile, as there is no longer any doubt about the conspirators, masked or not masked, let us go to the end of the plot."

Beausire indicated with a nod that he was ready to answer.

"The object is to carry off the King, is it not?"

"That is indeed the aim of the conspiracy."

"To take him to Péronne?"

"To Péronne!"

"And the means?"

"Pecuniary?"

"Yes, pecuniary, first of all."

"They have two millions."

"Borrowed of a Genoese banker. I know that banker. Is he the only one?"

"I don't know."

"Well, that 'll do very well for the money; but money is not enough. Men must be had."

"Lafayette has just authorized raising a legion to go to the help of Brabant, which is in revolt against the German Empire."

"Oh that amiable Lafayette," said Cagliostro to himself; "that is just like him!" Then he added aloud: "So, they 'll have a legion! But a legion can't execute such a project. They need an army."

"They have an army!"

"Ah, show us the army!"

"Twelve hundred horsemen will assemble at Versailles. They will start on the day appointed, at eleven at night. By two o'clock in the morning they will enter Paris in three columns."

"Good!"

"The first will enter by the Chaillot Gate; the second by the Barrière du Roule; and the third by the Grenelle. The Grenelle column will swallow up General Lafayette. The Chaillot column will choke off Prime Minister Necker. The other column will dispose of Bailly."

"Good!" repeated Cagliostro.

"This done they are to spike the guns, and then the three columns will reunite on the Champs Élysées, and march on the Tuileries, which will be on our side."

"How on your side? Where is the National Guard?"

"The Brabant volunteers will attend to that. Aided by part of the hired soldiery, — four hundred Swiss, — and by three hundred confederates from the country, the Brabant delegation, thanks to our accurate information about the Tuileries, will take possession of the doors, inside and outside. They will rush in upon the King, exclaiming 'Sire, the Saint Antoine section is in full insurrection. A carriage is all harnessed. You must flee!' If the King consents to flee, the rest will take care of itself. If he consents not, they will capture him forcibly, and take him to Saint Denis."

"Good!"

"There they will find twenty thousand infantry, whereto will be added twelve hundred horsemen, the Brabant legion, the four hundred Swiss mercenaries, the three hundred confederates, besides ten, twenty, thirty thousand Royalists, gathered along the route; and in great force they will conduct the amiable King of the French to Péronne."

"Better and better! And at Péronne, what will be done, dear Beausire?"

"At Péronne they will find twenty thousand, who will arrive at about the same time from the Flanders shipping, from Picardy, from Artois, Champagne, Burgundy, Lorraine, Alsace, and Cambrésis. They are also bargaining for twenty thousand more Swiss hirelings, twelve thousand Germans, and twelve thousand Sardinians, which, added to the King's large escort, will form an effective force of fifty thousand men."

"A very pretty number!" said Cagliostro.

"Finally, with these fifty thousand men, they will march on Paris, take possession of the river Seine above and below the city, so as to cut off all supplies. Paris, being famished, will capitulate. The National Assembly

will be dissolved. The King will be replaced — a King in deed and in truth — on the throne of his fathers."

"Amen!" said Cagliostro. Then he added, rising: "My dear Beausire, your conversation is very agreeable; but it is with you, as with most great orators, — when you have said everything, you have nothing more to say; and you have told the whole story, I believe?"

"Yes, for the present!"

"Very well! When you want ten more louis, — always as a *gift*, be it understood, — come and find me at my place, Bellevue."

"At Bellevue; and I shall ask for Monsieur Cagliostro?"

"Cagliostro? Oh no, they would n't understand you. Ask for the Baron Zannone."

"Baron Zannone?" cried Beausire. "Why, that 's the name of the banker who has discounted two millions worth of paper for *Monsieur*."

"Very possible!"

"How, *possible?*"

"Yes; only I do so much business, that one item may easily be confounded with others. That is why I did n't at first recollect; but I think I do recall the fact now."

Beausire was in a state of stupefaction, in the presence of a man who could forget business involving two millions, and began to think, that even from a pecuniary point of view, it is better to be of service to the lender than the borrower.

As this stupefaction was not so deep as to make him forget where he was, at the sound of Cagliostro's first move towards the gate, Beausire noted the action, and followed, with a step so closely modelled after his leader's, that, seeing them march thus in single file, one after the other, one might mistake them for automatons, moved by the same spring. Only at the entrance, after the

grating was fastened, did the two appear to be wholly separate.

"Well," asked Cagliostro, "which way do you go?"

"And yourself?"

"In the direction which you do *not*."

"I am going to the Palace Royal, Monsieur."

"And I to the Bastille."

On this the two men separated, Beausire saluting the Count with deepest respect, and Cagliostro responding with a slight nod; and both disappeared, almost at the same time, in the midst of the obscurity, Cagliostro going towards the Rue Temple, and Beausire towards the Rue de la Verrerie.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

IN WHICH GAMAIN PROVES THAT HE IS TRULY MASTER OF THE MASTER, MASTER OF ALL.

It may be remembered that the King expressed, in presence of Lafayette and young Louis de Bouillé, a desire to have near him his old teacher Gamain, to aid in an important bit of mechanism. He even added, — and it may be well to record this detail, — that an adroit apprentice would not be unwelcome to complete the mechanical triumvirate. This number three, which pleases the gods of good-luck, was happily not displeasing to Lafayette; and he consequently gave orders for the free access to the King of Master Gamain and his apprentice, and that they should be admitted to the forge whenever they presented themselves.

It was not therefore astonishing, several days after the conversation before reported, to see Master Gamain, — who is no stranger to our readers, as he was carefully pointed out on the morning of the Sixth of October, drinking a bottle of burgundy with an unknown gun-maker, in the tavern near Sèvres Bridge, — it was not therefore astonishing, we repeat, a few days after the King's conversation with Lafayette, to see Gamain, accompanied by an apprentice, both clad in working-clothes, present themselves at the entrance of the Tuileries. After their admission, which was accorded without any difficulty, they walked around the royal apartments by way of the public corridors, ascended the staircase to the

attics, and gave their names and titles as follows, to the attendant on duty: Nicholas Claude Gamain, master locksmith; Louis Lecomte, apprentice.

Although there was nothing aristocratic in either of these names or titles, hardly were they announced when Louis Sixteenth ran to the door, exclaiming, "Come in!"

"Here we are!" said Gamain, entering, not merely with the familiarity of a guest, but as if he were at least the master.

Perhaps because he was less accustomed to intercourse with royalty, and naturally endowed with great respect for crowned heads, in whatever costume they appeared to him, or in whatever guise he appeared before them, — at any rate, for some reason, the apprentice, by not responding at once to the King's bidding, left a convenient interval between Gamain and himself, and so remained standing, his jacket on his arm and his cap in his hand, near the door, which the valet had closed behind them.

Perhaps it was easier from this point, than it would have been if he had stood side by side with Gamain, to catch the flash of joy which gleamed in the dull eye of the King, and respond thereto with a respectful inclination of the head.

"Ah, is it thou, my dear Gamain?" said the King. "I am right glad to see thee. Indeed, I did not expect thee, and believed thou hadst forgotten me."

"And that 's why you took an apprentice! That 's all right, seeing I was n't here; but unhappily," he added, with a sly gesture, "the apprentice is n't a master, hey?"

The apprentice made a sign to the King.

"What wouldst thou have, my poor Gamain?" asked the King. "I was assured thou wouldst never have

anything to do with me, — never again, — for fear of compromising thyself."

"Faith, Sire, you must have been convinced, for yourself, at Versailles, that it went hard with your friends; and in the cabaret at Sèvres Bridge I saw, with my own eyes, two heads frizzled by Monsieur Léonard himself, — two heads which grinned horribly, — of those two guardsmen who happened to be in your antechamber, when your good friends came from Paris to visit you."

A cloud swept over the King's face, and the apprentice lowered his head.

"But," continued Gamain, "they say things are better since you came back to Paris, and that now you can do what you please with these Parisians. Oh, that 's not strange! Your Parisians are such asses, and the Queen is such a wheedler, when she chooses."

Louis Sixteenth said nothing, but a faint blush reddened his cheeks.

As to the young man, he seemed greatly distressed by these familiarities on Gamain's part. After wiping his forehead, with a handkerchief somewhat too fine for a locksmith's apprentice, he came nearer and said: "Your Majesty will perhaps allow me to tell how it is that Master Gamain has the honor of seeing the face of your Majesty once more, and how I happen to be with him?"

"Yes, my dear Louis," replied the King.

"Ah, there it is! *My dear Louis!* as large as life," muttered Gamain. — "*My dear Louis!* — to an acquaintance of a fortnight, — to a workman, an apprentice. What do you call me, — me, who have known you five-and-twenty years, — me, who put the first file into your hand, — me, the master? That 's what it is to have a glib tongue and white hands!"

"I call thee, *My good Gamain*, and I call this youth, *My dear Louis*, not because he expresses himself more elegantly than thyself, not because he washes his hands oftener, — for I care little, as thou knowest, for these trifles, — but because he found a way of bringing thee here, my friend, when they told me thou wouldst refuse to see me again."

"Oh, it was n't *me* who would n't see you ; for as for me, — well, in spite of your faults, I rather like you, after all ; but it was my wife, Madame Gamain, who kept saying to me : 'Thou hast bad associates, Gamain, — associates too high for thee. It is not well to visit aristocrats in these days. We have n't much property, but let us guard it. We have children ; let us look out for them ! If the Dauphin wishes to learn lockmaking by-and-by, let him go to somebody else. There is no scarcity of locksmiths in France.' This is how she talked ; and even *you* know how women *can* talk !"

The King glanced at the apprentice, and said, stifling a sigh, half humorous and half piteous : "Undoubtedly there are plenty of locksmiths in France, but not another like thyself."

"That 's what I told the master, Sire," interrupted the apprentice, "when I went to see him in your behalf. I told him the King was trying to make a secret lock, and needed the aid of a locksmith ; that the King heard of me, and sent for me ; that this was very flattering, and so far, so good ; but that it was fine work the King was about. The lock was well enough, so far as the partitions, the case, and the springs went, because everybody knows that three springs, dovetailed on to the flange, are enough to connect the partition solidly with the box ; but when it came to moving the bolt, then the workman was bothered."

"I believe you!" said Gamain. "The bolt is the very soul of the lock."

"And the masterpiece of lockmaking, when well done," said the apprentice; "but there are bolts and *bolts*. There is the sleeping-bolt; there is the lever-bolt, which moves with the half-turn; there is the nut-bolt, for moving the latch. Well, suppose now, for instance, that we have a bored key, which must be thrust through an aperture in the woodwork, with a shallow sinkage on one side, and a deeper sinkage on the other, requiring two wheels with a reversible catch inside, to be pushed from the outside, what sort of a bolt would be necessary for such a key? That 's where we came to a standstill."

"The fact is, everybody can't do such a job as that," said Gamain.

"Precisely! That 's why I went after you, Master Gamain. Whenever the King was bothered he would say to me, with a sigh: 'Oh, if Gamain were only here!' So at last I said to the King: 'Well, why not have him here, this famous Gamain, and let him finish the work;' but the King always answered: 'Useless, my poor Louis. Gamain has forgotten me!' — 'Forget his Majesty, a man to whom had been accorded the honor of working at his Majesty's side? Impossible!' — So I said to the King: 'I will go and find this master of masters, this master of all.' The King said: 'Go, but thou canst not bring him!' But I declared I *would* bring you, and so set forth. Ah, Sire, I did not know what a task I had undertaken, and with what sort of a man I had to deal. Why, when I went to him as an apprentice, he put me through an examination which was worse than that required for entering the School of Cadets. Well, never mind, I stayed there with him. The next day I ventured to tell him that I had come on your account. Well, I began to

think he would put me clean out of doors. He called me a spy. I tried to convince him that I was really sent by the King; but that counted for nothing. It was only when I declared that the King and I had begun together a piece of work we could not finish properly, that Master Gamain opened his ears to me; but even this did not decide him. He said it was a snare set by his enemies. It was only yesterday, when I handed him the twenty-five louis which your Majesty had given me for that purpose, that he at last said: 'Ah ha! That certainly does come from the King himself. Well, we 'll go to-morrow, for whoso nothing risks shall nothing gain.' — All the evening I kept the master in good humor; and this morning I said to him: 'See, it 's time to go!' I still had some difficulty with him, but at last he decided; so I tied his apron about him, put his staff in his hand, and urged him out of doors. We took the road to Paris, and here we are!"

"And you are welcome!" said the King, thanking the young man with a sidelong glance; for the apprentice had evidently taken as much pains with the matter, and especially with the manner of his recital, — which sounded almost as if it were read, — as Master Gamain might have done with a sermon by Bossuet or a speech by Fléchier.

"Now Gamain," added his Majesty, "as thou art forced here at last, let us lose no time."

"That 's right!" said the locksmith, "for I promised Madame Gamain to be home to-night. Let 's see this famous lock!"

The King placed in the master's hands a lock three-quarters made.

"Why didst thou tell me this was a hidden mortised lock?" said Gamain to his apprentice. "That sort of a lock fastens from two sides, stupid! This is only a closet-lock. Let 's see a little about it! This don't work

very well, hey? Well, with Master Gamain, it 'll *have* to work!" and he tried to turn the key. "Ah, there it is!"

"Thou hast found the defect, dear Gamain?"

"I should say so!"

"Well, show me!"

"That 's quickly done! Look! The ward of the key catches the large ridge well enough, and the ridge describes a half circle; but then, as it is not bevelled off, the key finishes its twist all alone, and the spring falls back again. That 's all! The play of the ridge being six lines, the shoulder should be one line wide." Both King and apprentice noted Gamain's science with wonder.

Encouraged by their tacit admiration he continued: "Good gracious, it 's very simple. I don't see how you managed to forget it. You must have been mixed up with a heap of foolishness, since you saw me, which has spoilt your memory. You have three ridges, — have n't you? — one large and two small, — one five lines long, and the others only two lines."

"Undoubtedly," said the King, following Gamain's demonstration with some interest.

"Well, as soon as the key releases the large ridge, it should unfasten the bolt, which had been held in place, — should n't it?"

"Yes," said the King.

"Very well, on its second half-turn the key must catch the second ridge, the minute the first is released?"

"Yes, yes, yes!" said the King.

"Yes, yes, yes!" repeated Gamain, impertinently. "Well, how do you suppose this poor key can do that, if the space between the large and small ridges is not equal to the thickness of the wards of the key, and allows too much play?"

"Ah!"

"Ah!" repeated Gamain jeeringly, as before. "You are the fine great King of France, and say, *I will*. The little ridge says *I won't*; and so, good-night, lock! This is just the way you bicker with the Assembly, and the Assembly is the strongest."

"However, this lock may be cured, master, may it not?" asked the King.

"Great Heavens, there's always a remedy. It is only necessary to sharpen the first ridge a little, to enlarge the shoulder a trifle, to remove the first ridge a little farther from the second, and replace, at the same distance, the third ridge, — the one which makes part of the spur, and rests on the pin, — and there you are!"

"But it will take a day's work to make all these changes," said the King.

"Yes, for anybody else, — a day's labor; but for Gamain, two hours will suffice, — if he is let alone, and not bothered with remarks, — Gamain this, Gamain that! The forge appears to be well supplied with tools; and in two hours, if I'm let alone, — especially if the labor is comfortably moistened," — continued Gamain, smiling, "you may come back and find the agony all over."

What Gamain requested was exactly what the King desired. The locksmith's desire for solitude furnished the King an excuse for a *tête-à-tête* with the apprentice. However, the King pretended to raise objections.

"But if thou hast need of anything, my dear, good Gamain —?"

"If I need anything I will call the lackey, and provided he has orders to give me what I want, — well, that's all I need."

The King went himself to the door, saying as he opened it: "François, stay at your post! Here is Gamain, my old instructor in lockmaking, who is correcting a bad

piece of work. You will get him whatever he wants, and particularly one or two bottles of excellent bordeaux."

"If you would have the goodness to remember, Sire, I like burgundy much better! — To the Devil with your bordeaux. It 's like drinking lukewarm water."

"Yes, yes, that 's true! I forgot!" said the King, laughing. "We have clinked glasses many a time together, my poor Gamain. — Some burgundy, François, — you hear, some Volnay!"

"Good!" said Gamain, licking his chops, "I remember that name."

"And it makes thy mouth water?"

"Don't talk about water! Water? I don't see what use it is, unless for tempering iron. Those who use it for anything else turn it from its proper destination. Water? Pooh!"

"Well, be calm. While here, thou shalt hear nothing of water; and lest the word should escape one of us involuntarily, we will leave thee all alone. When we are wanted, send for us."

"And what are you going to do all this time?"

"See to the closet, for which this lock is intended."

"Well, that 's the kind of work you 're fit for. Good luck!"

"Good courage!" responded the King; and nodding his head familiarly to Gamain he went out with the apprentice, Louis Lecomte, or Count Louis, as the reader prefers, — the reader to whom we ascribe perspicacity enough to have recognized the son of the Marquis de Bouillé in the sham workman.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

IN WHICH SOMETHING BESIDES LOCKMAKING IS DISCUSSED.

The King did not leave his workshop by the outside staircase, common to all the occupants of the palace, but by the private stairs reserved for himself. This stairway led directly into his study.

One table in this office was covered by an immense map of France, which showed that the King had already often considered what would be the shortest and easiest route out of his kingdom.

It was not, however, till they had reached the bottom of the staircase, and the door was fastened behind both himself and his companion, that Louis Sixteenth, after looking carefully about the room, appeared to recognize the person who followed, with his jacket over his shoulder and his cap in hand.

"At last," he said, "we are alone, my dear Count. First of all, let me congratulate you on your adroitness, and thank you for your devotion."

"As for me, Sire, let me apologize to his Majesty," said the young man, "for daring, even in his own service, to present myself, while clad in such a fashion, before the King, and for talking to him as I have."

"You have acted as a brave gentleman, my dear Louis, and however you may be clothed, a loyal heart always beats under your coat. But come, we have no time to lose. Everybody, even the Queen, is ignorant of your

presence here. Nobody is within hearing. Tell me quickly what has brought you."

"Your Majesty has done my father the honor of sending an officer to his house?"

"Yes, — Monsieur de Charny."

"Precisely, Charny. He brought a letter —?"

"An insignificant letter," interrupted the King, — "only to furnish him with an introduction for the delivery of a verbal message."

"This verbal mission he fulfilled; and it was to make its execution sure that I came to Paris, under orders from my father, and in the hope of speaking face to face with your Majesty."

"Then you have been informed of everything?"

"I know that the King wishes to have the power of leaving France, at any given moment."

"And that he relies upon the Marquis de Bouillé, as a man capable of seconding his project."

"And my father is both proud and grateful, because of the honor you have done him."

"But let us come to the principal point. What does he say of the project?" asked the King.

"That it is hazardous, that it demands the greatest precautions; but that it is not impossible."

"To begin with, in order that the co-operation of De Bouillé may be as efficacious as his loyalty and devotion promise, would it not be well to add several other provinces to his present jurisdiction at Metz, and especially the command of Franche Comté?"

"That is exactly the advice of my father, Sire; but I am glad the King is first to express his opinion on that point, for the Marquis feared lest the King should attribute such a desire to personal ambition."

"What? Am I not already well acquainted with the

disinterestedness of your father? But go on! Did he talk with you about the particulars?"

"Above all, Sire, my father dreaded one thing."

"What was that?"

"That if several plans of flight should be presented to your Majesty, one from Spain, one from the German Empire, one from the émigrés at Turin, and these projects should run counter to one another, that his own plan might prove abortive, through some of those fortuitous circumstances usually ascribed to Fate, which are almost always the result of imprudence or jealousy in the interested parties."

"My dear Louis, I promise you to let all the world carry on its intrigues about me, without my interference. In the first place, some parties need such experiments; and then, this is a necessity of my position. As long as the wit of Lafayette and the interest of the Assembly are drawn towards threads whose only purpose is to mislead, we can take our own way, with no other confidants than the persons strictly necessary for the accomplishment of our plans, — all of them persons on whom we can thoroughly rely, — and we can do this with as much security as privacy."

"That point being determined, Sire, here is what my father has the honor of proposing to your Majesty."

"Speak on!" said the King, bending over the map of France, in order to follow with his eyes the different routes which the young Count was about to explain.

"Sire, there are several places to which the King might retire."

"Undoubtedly!"

"Has the King made his choice?"

"Not entirely. I waited for the advice of the Marquis, and I presume you bring it."

The young man made a respectful and affirmative response with his head.

"Go on," said the King.

"In the first place, there is Besançon, whose citadel makes it a very strong position, and very advantageous for the collection of troops, and for summoning the Swiss soldiers to our aid. These Swiss, added to our forces, could advance through Burgundy, where Royalists are numerous, and thence march upon Paris."

The King shook his head, in a way which signified: "I should prefer something different."

The young man therefore resumed: "Then there is Valenciennes, or some other place in Flanders, with a secure garrison. Either before or after the King's arrival, my father would betake himself thither with the men under his immediate command."

Louis Sixteenth gave another nod, which seemed to say, "Something else, Monsieur!"

"The King might go by way of Ardennes and Austrian Flanders, and return by the same frontier, to some one of the places controlled by the Marquis, which he would surrender to the King's authority, and where troops could be gathered in advance."

"I will tell you presently why I must still ask if you have nothing better to propose."

"Lastly, the King might betake himself straight to Sedan or Montmédy. There, being at the centre of his command, the General would be able to obey the King's wishes, and assure him liberty of action, whether he should wish to leave France or to march against Paris."

"My dear Count," said the King, "in two words I will explain what makes me reject the first three propositions, and why I shall probably adopt the fourth. First, Besançon is too far off, and consequently I should run

too many chances of being arrested before reaching my destination. Next, Valenciennes is well enough as to distance, and would be agreeable to me also, because of the excellent spirit of that city; but Rochambeau is in command of Hainault, — that is, at the very gates of Valenciennes, — and he is wholly given over to the democratic spirit. As to going by way of Ardennes and Austrian Flanders, and so appealing to Austria — *no!* Apart from my dislike of Austria, who never meddles with French affairs without embroiling us somehow, — apart from this, Austria has enough to do just now, — what with the illness of the Emperor, my brother-in-law, the war with the Turks, and the revolt in Brabant, — without increasing her embarrassment by a rupture with France. Besides, I will not go out of France. Once outside his kingdom, a king knows not if he shall ever return. Consider Charles the Second and James the Second, of England. Charles did not go back till the end of thirteen years, and James, never! — No, I prefer Montmédy. Montmédy is at a convenient distance, and is the centre of your father's jurisdiction. Tell the Marquis that my choice is so far made, and that it is to Montmédy I will retire."

The young Count ventured to ask: "Is the King resolved upon flight, or is it only a project as yet?"

"My dear Louis, nothing is decided. All must depend upon circumstances. If I see that the Queen and my children are exposed to new perils, like those of that terrible night and day in early October, I shall make up my mind at once; and tell your father that when the decision is once made, it will be irrevocable."

"Meanwhile, Sire, may I be permitted to submit to the King's judgment the advice of my father as to the details of the journey?"

"Certainly! Speak on!"

"His opinion is, that we should diminish the dangers of the trip by dividing them."

"Explain yourself!"

"Your Majesty should go in one direction, with Madame Royale, your daughter, and with Madame Elizabeth, your sister; while the Queen should go another way, with Monseigneur the Dauphin, in order that —"

The King did not let the young man finish his sentence.

"It is useless to discuss that point, my dear Louis. In a very solemn moment we decided, the Queen and myself, that we would never separate. If your father can save us, we must be saved together, or not at all!"

The Count bowed and said: "When the right time comes the King has but to give his orders, and the royal orders will be executed; only I must be permitted to suggest to the King, that it will be difficult to procure a vehicle large enough for the accommodation of their Majesties, their august children, Madame Elizabeth, and the two or three attendants who ought to accompany them for the sake of comfort."

"Don't worry about that, my dear Louis. A carriage is being made on purpose. That contingency is provided for."

"One other thing, Sire! There are two roads to Montmédy. It only remains to ask which of these your Majesty would prefer, in order to have the matter looked into by a trustworthy expert."

"This trustworthy surveyor we already have, — in Charny, who is all devotion, and has already revised the maps of Chandernagor, with remarkable fidelity and skill. The fewer persons with whom we place our secret, the

better; and we have in Charny an approved follower, intelligent and courageous, and will avail ourselves of his services. As to the route, you see that I have been thinking about that. As I had already selected Montmédy, the two routes which lead thither are marked on this map."

"There are three roads, Sire," answered the young man respectfully.

"Yes, I know. There is the one leading from Paris to Metz, which one must quit after passing Verdun, in order to take the road along the river Meuse, as far as Stenay, from which Montmédy is only three leagues distant."

"There is the route by way of Rheims, the Isle de France, Rethel, and Stenay," said the young Count, so vivaciously that the King could see that his interlocutor gave this plan the preference.

"Ah! ah!" said the King, "it appears that you like that way best?"

"Not I, Sire! God forbid that I, little more than a boy, should take the responsibility of giving an opinion about so grave a matter. No, Sire, that is not my opinion, except as it is my father's; but he based his judgment on the fact that this route lies through a district so poor as to be almost a desert, one wherein fewer precautions would therefore be needed. He added, that the best regiment in the army, the only one which is known to remain thoroughly faithful, — the Royal German, — is stationed at Stenay, and could be the King's escort beyond Rethel, thus avoiding the danger of too many military transfers."

"Yes," interrupted the King, "but we should have to go through Rheims, where I was crowned, and where the first comer would be sure to recognize me. No, my dear Count, on that point my decision is final."

The King pronounced these words in so firm a tone that Count Louis had no thought of combating this determination; so he asked: "The King has then chosen — ?"

"— The route to Châlons, through Varennes, avoiding Verdun. As to the regiments, they can be gradually stationed in the small cities between Montmédy and Châlons. It would not be inconvenient, so far as I can see, if the first detachment should wait for me in the latter city."

"Sire, when the time comes, we can discuss in what city the regiments will incur the least risk; but the King is not aware of one thing, that there is no station for posthorses at Varennes."

"I'm glad to see you so well posted," said the king, laughing. "It proves that you have seriously meditated upon our venture. But do not be uneasy on that score. We shall find means for having posthorses on hand, either beyond the city or this side of it. Our surveyor will tell us which is best."

"Now that all is arranged," said the young Count, "will his Majesty authorize me to recite to him, in the name of my father, some lines from an Italian author, pertinent to the royal situation, — some lines he had me learn by heart, in order that I might repeat them here?"

"By all means, Monsieur!"

"Here they are, Sire: 'Delay is always dangerous, and circumstances are never entirely favorable to any undertaking; so that if we wait for the perfect time, we shall never undertake anything; or if we do, it will turn out badly.' Your Majesty will remember, it is the author who speaks."

"Ah yes, Monsieur, and that author is Machiavelli. I will not forget the counsel of the ambassador of the

Magnificent Republic, believe me! — But hush! I hear steps on the stairs. Gamain is coming down. Let us get in ahead of him, so that he will not notice that we have been occupied with anything but the closet."

With these words the King opened the door of the private staircase. It was time, for the master locksmith was on the lower steps, with the lock in his hand.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

IN WHICH IT IS DEMONSTRATED THAT THERE IS TRULY A PROVIDENCE FOR DRUNKARDS.

On the same day, about eight o'clock in the evening, a man clad like a mechanic, — and pressing his waistcoat pocket, as if on this particular evening the pocket contained a considerably larger sum than is customary with a mechanic's pocket, — a man, we say, came out of the Tuileries, over the Pont Tournant (which had not at that date been removed), turned to the left, and walked from one end to the other of the grand avenue of trees, which runs along the side of the Seine, forming that portion of the Champs Élysées formerly called the Port au Marbre, or sometimes the Port aux Pierres, but now known as the Cours-la-Reine.

At the end of that avenue he found himself on what was then called the Quai de la Savonnerie, though this appellation has long since disappeared.

This quay, at that epoch, was very lively in the daytime, and well lighted in the evening by a crowd of booths, where, on Sunday, good citizens could buy the provisions, liquid and solid, which they wished to take with them on the freight-boats, which, at two sous a head, would land them on the Isle of Swans for a day's outing; an island where, without this precaution, they would run the risk of being famished, — on week-days, because the place was utterly deserted, and on holidays and Sundays, because it was so thickly populated.

At the first wineshop he encountered on the way, this man, clothed like a mechanic, appeared to have a violent combat with himself, — a combat wherein he came off conqueror, — to decide whether he should or should not enter that wineshop.

He did not enter, but passed along.

At the second cabaret the temptation was renewed; and this time another man, — who followed the first one like a shadow, but without being perceived, — evidently believed that the mechanic would succumb to the temptation; inasmuch as he deviated from the straight line, and bent his steps towards that annex of the Temple of Bacchus, whose threshold he fairly grazed.

Nevertheless, temperance triumphed this time also. If a third wineshop had not put itself in his path, and he could not have broken the pledge (which he had apparently made to himself) without retracing his steps, it is probable he would have continued soberly on his way, — not indeed fasting, for our traveller had already taken a square dose of that liquor which rejoices the heart of man, but in that state of self-control which would allow his head to keep his legs in a reasonably straight course in the journey before him.

Unluckily there was not only a third, but even a tenth, — yes, and a twentieth wineshop on the way. The temptation being too often renewed, and the resisting force finding itself unequal to the power of the temptation, the result was that he yielded on the third trial.

It is but fair to say that by a sort of bargain with himself, at the very entrance of the wineshop, the mechanic (who had so far happily and successfully fought the demon of wine) remained standing at the counter, and asked for only a pint.

Meanwhile the wine-devil, against whom he had struggled so victoriously heretofore, seemed to be typified by the Unknown who followed at a distance, taking care to keep always in the obscurity; but who, though remaining out of sight, was none the less vigilant.

Doubtless it was to enjoy the perspective, which seemed to be so very agreeable to him, that he seated himself on the parapet, just opposite the sign of the bush over the door where the mechanic was drinking his pint; but he resumed his travels five minutes later, when the mechanic, having finished his drink, crossed the threshold of the door, and took his line of march.

But who can say where the lips will stop when once they have drunk from the fatal cup of intoxication, and they perceive, with that mingled astonishment and satisfaction peculiar to tipplers, that nothing excites thirst like drinking. Hardly had the mechanic gone a hundred paces than his thirst was such that he felt obliged to again pause and quench it; only this time he understood that a pint was not enough, and so he asked for a half-bottle.

The shadow, which seemed to belong to him, did not appear to feel displeased with these delays, which the need of refreshment occasioned in the course of the journey. He stopped in the angle of the cabaret, and while the drinker was seated, in order to be more at his ease, and took a full quarter-hour for sipping his half-bottle, the good-natured shadow manifested no impatience, but contented himself, when the drinker came out, by following at the same distance as before.

At the end of the next hundred paces his forbearance was put to a new and harder proof. The workman made a third halt, and this time his thirst had become so augmented that he demanded an entire bottle.

This meant a half-hour for the patient Argus who dogged his steps.

Probably these five, fifteen, and thirty minutes, successively lost, roused some remorse in the heart of the tippler; for not wishing to delay any longer, but yet desiring to continue his refreshment, he apparently made another bargain with conscience, which ended in his providing himself, on his departure, with another bottle, already uncorked, which he resolved to take along as a travelling-companion.

This was a wise resolution, and one which did not retard him much, except for the curves, more and more extended, and the zigzags, more and more frequent, which were the result of each contact of the neck of the bottle with the thirsty lips of the tippler.

In one of these curves, adroitly swung, he crossed the Passy Barrier, without disturbing anybody, — for liquors, as we know, were free from excise duty, when they were taken away from the capital, though not when they were brought into it from the country beyond.

The Unknown passed through behind him, and with the same success.

A hundred paces beyond the barrier our man felicitated himself over his innocent precaution; for from that point the wineshops became few and far between, till at last they disappeared altogether; but what mattered it to our philosopher? Like a classic sage, he carried with him not only his fortune, but his happiness.

We say his happiness, because, when the bottle was about half empty, the tippler began to sing; and nobody has ever contested the fact that singing, like laughing, is one of the methods by which man expresses his joy.

His shadow appeared duly sensible of the harmony of the tippler's song, for he hummed the air after him; and

the expression of joy, with which he followed the tippler's movements, evinced some special interest.

Unfortunately the joy was ephemeral and the song very short. The joy only lasted as long as there was wine in the bottle; and the bottle being empty, and several times fruitlessly squeezed between the tippler's hands, the singing changed to growling, which grew more and more emphatic, till at last the growls expanded into oaths, and the oaths into imprecations.

These imprecations were addressed to some unseen persecutors, of whom our traveller complained as he staggered along.

"Wretches!" he said, "wretches! to give an old friend, — and a master, too, — such doctored wine! Ugh! Well, when he sends for me again to patch up his old locks, when he sends after me by that traitor of a comrade who abandons me, I will say to him: 'Good-d-day, Sire, but thy M-m-majesty may patch up his locks himself.' Then he 'll see if — if — if a lock can be m-made as easily as a m-m-manifesto! Ah, *I* 'll give thee a lock with three ridges. — I 'll g-g-give thee a b-bolt with three t-t-tumblers. Oh yes, — I 'll give thee — bored keys and side h-handles — notched — notch — Oh you wretches! decidedly they 've poisoned me."

As he uttered these words the unfortunate victim, doubtless vanquished by this poison, fell at full length, for the third time, on the road, softly spread with a thick covering of mud.

Twice our man was able to get up alone. The operation was indeed difficult, but he finally accomplished it creditably. The third time, after desperate efforts, he felt obliged to own that the task was beyond his strength; and, with a sigh which resembled a groan, he apparently

decided to take for his couch that night the breast of our common mother, the earth.

It was apparently for this point of discouragement and feebleness that the unknown waited, who had followed him from Place Louis XV. with so much perseverance; for after watching, from a distance, the ineffectual efforts which we have tried to depict, he approached the man very cautiously, made a detour around his fallen grandeur, and then hailed a passing cab.

"Hold on, friend!" he said to the driver. "My companion here has been taken sick. Take this crown of six livres, put the poor devil inside the carriage, and take him to the tavern at Sèvres Bridge. I will ride aloft with you."

There was nothing surprising to the coachman in this proposition, that one of the two companions should remain with him and share his seat, especially as they appeared to be common sort of men; so with that touching confidence which men of that condition repose in one another, he said: "Six francs? And where are the six francs?"

"Here they are, my friend!" replied the man who had made the offer, giving the crown to the driver, and without appearing offended the least in the world.

"And when we are there, goodman," said the coachman, softened by the sight of the royal head on the coin, "there will be not even a trifle for drink-money?"

"That depends upon how we get on. Put this poor devil in thy cab, shut the windows carefully, try to keep thy two plugs on their four legs, and when we reach Sevres Bridge, — well, we shall see. According to *thy* conduct will be *mine*."

"All right! Money talks. Be easy, goodman. I know what 's what! Climb into my seat, and don't let

those young turkeys get foolish. Gracious, at this hour they smell the stable, and are anxious to get there again. I 'll see to the rest."

The generous Unknown, without another word, followed the instruction given him; and on his side the driver, with all the delicacy whereof he was capable, lifted the drunkard in his arms, laid him softly between the seats of his cab, closed the door, remounted his seat, where he found the Unknown already established, turned his team about, whipped his horses, who jogged along at that melancholy pace common with these unfortunate quadrupeds, speedily passed through the village called Point-au-Jour, and at the expiration of an hour's ride, reached the cabaret near the Sèvres Bridge.

After ten minutes spent in unloading our belated citizen Gamain, — whom the reader of course long ago recognized, — we once more find the worthy master of the master, and master of all, seated at the same table, and face to face with the same gunmaker, as we saw him in the first chapter of this history.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

WHAT IS CALLED CHANCE.

MEANWHILE, how was this unloading managed, and how did Master Gamain emerge from that almost cataleptic state, wherein we left him, into the nearly normal condition, wherein we now find him?

The landlord of the inn at Sèvres Bridge was abed, and not the faintest streak of light filtered through the chinks of his outside shutters, when the first blows of the fist of our philanthropist, who had rescued Master Gamain, resounded at the door. These blows of the fist were administered in a fashion that did not allow the occupants of the house to long believe themselves able to enjoy repose in the face of such an attack, however given over to sleep they might be.

Very sleepily, very clumsily, and very fractiously, the innkeeper himself came to open the door for the disturbers of his slumbers, promising himself to administer a rebuke worthy of the occasion, — if, as he said to himself, the game should not prove worth the candle.

It appeared that the game *was* worth the candle; for at the first word whispered to mine host, by the man who had knocked so loudly, the innkeeper doffed his cotton nightcap, making certain salutes which his costume rendered singularly grotesque, and at once introduced Gamain and his conductor into the little apartment, where we formerly saw the locksmith discussing a bottle of burgundy, his favorite liquor; though this time, from

having tested his wine too roundly, Master Gamain was nearly insensible.

As the coachman and his horses had done their best, one with his whip and the others with their legs, the Unknown began by discharging his debt to them, — adding a coin of twenty-four sous, by way of drink-money, to the six francs already paid.

Then, seeing Master Gamain seated squarely on a chair, — his head leaning against the wall, with a table in front of him, — the Unknown bade the landlord hasten to bring two bottles of wine and a decanter of water, and himself threw open the casements and blinds, in order to change the mephitic air which filled the room.

Under any other circumstances this action would have compromised his incognito; for every observer knows, that while there are people, of a certain class, who need to respire the atmosphere in its natural condition, — that is, air composed of seventy parts of oxygen, twenty-one of nitrogen, and two of water, — there are nevertheless hosts of ordinary people, accustomed to unventilated habitations, who breathe the air without any difficulty whatsoever, even if it is charged with carbon or nitrogen.

Fortunately nobody was there to take note of his actions. The landlord, after having brought with alacrity two bottles of wine, and, more slowly, a decanter of water, respectfully withdrew himself, and left the Unknown alone with Master Gamain.

First of all, as we know, the Unknown took care to change the air. Then, before the window was closed, he placed a vial of salts to the sniffling and dilated nostrils of Master Locksmith, who was now involved in disgusting drunken slumber, — a slumber which would surely cure tipplers of their love of wine, if, by the miraculous power

of the Most High, they could once behold themselves asleep.

As he inhaled the penetrating odor of the liquid contained in the vial, Master Gamain opened his eyes very wide, and immediately began to sneeze furiously. Then he uttered some words, unintelligible to almost anybody except some expert philologist, like him who now listened with profound attention, and managed to catch these three or four words: "The wretch! She 's poisoned me — poisoned! — "

The gunsmith saw with satisfaction that Master Gamain was still under the dominance of the same idea, and again he put the vial to the drunkard's nostrils. This restored the worthy son of Noah sufficiently for him to complete the sense of his phrase, and add thereto a few last words, containing an accusation all the more terrible, because it denoted abuse of confidence and want of heart.

"Poison a friend! — a friend! " he said.

"That is indeed horrible! " observed the gunsmith.

"Horrible! " babbled Gamain.

"Infamous! " replied Number One.

"Infamous! " echoed Number Two.

"Luckily I was on hand," said the gunsmith, "to administer an antidote."

"Lucky indeed! " muttered Gamain.

"Lest the first dose may not be sufficient to counteract such a poisoning, better take another! " said the Unknown; as into half a glass of water he put five or six drops of liquid from his flacon, — which contained nothing more nor less than some strong diluted hartshorn, or ammonia.

He placed the glass to Gamain's lips. "Ah," stammered the latter, "that 's to be drunk with the mouth!

I like that better than by the nose;" and he thirstily drank the entire contents of the goblet.

Hardly had he swallowed this diabolical liquor, when he stretched his eyes to their utmost capacity, and cried, between two sneezes: "Ah, you rascal, what have you given me? — Pouah! Pouah!"

"My dear fellow," responded the Unknown, "I have only given you some liquor, which may save your life."

"Well, if 't saves my life, you do right to give it to me; but if you call that *liquor*, you 're wrong;" whereupon he began to sneeze again, pursing his mouth and opening his eyes to their fullest extent, like a classic mask of Tragedy.

The Unknown profited by this pantomimic movement, to go and close, not the window, but the outside shutters.

Gamain opened his eyes for the third or fourth time In the midst of his convulsive movements he looked about him; and, with that ready recollection which tipplers cherish of wineshop walls, he recognized this as one of his familiar resorts.

Indeed, on his frequent trips to Paris, which his trade necessitated, it was seldom that Gamain did not stop at the Sèvres Bridge Inn. From one point of view, this halt was necessary as well as very agreeable, the wineshop in question being practically the half-way tavern between Versailles and the capital.

This recognition produced a good effect. It inspired Master Locksmith with confidence, and proved that he was in a friendly country.

"Ah ha! It appears that I have already finished half my journey."

"Yes, thanks to me!" said the gunsmith.

"How, *thanks to you?*" stammered Master Gamain,

transferring his interest from inanimate to animate objects. "*Thanks to you?* Who are you, pray?"

"My dear Monsieur Gamain," said the Unknown, "that question proves you have a very short memory."

Gamain looked at his interlocutor with more attention than at first. "Hold on, hold on!" he said. "It seems to me that I've seen you before."

"Truly? Well, that's pleasant!"

"Yes, yes, yes! But when and where? That's the thing!"

"*Where?* Look about you! Perhaps something will strike your eye and refresh your memory. — *When?* That's another thing. Perhaps we must try another dose of the antidote, to help you tell me that."

"No, thanks," said Gamain, putting up his hand; "I've had enough of your antidote! If I'm nearly saved, I'll stop right here. — Where have I seen you? — Where have I seen you? — Dear me, it was *here!*"

"Right, so far!"

"*When* did I see you? — Hold on! It was the day when I came back from a job in Paris, — secret! It seems that I'm lucky in such enterprises," added Gamain, laughing.

"Very well! Now who am I?"

"Who are you? You're the man who paid the drinks, and consequently a good feller. Put it there!"

"With much pleasure!" said the Unknown; "Master Locksmith and Master Gunsmith must certainly shake hands."

"Ah, good, good! Now I remember! Yes, it was that Sixth of October, when the King returned to Paris. Why, we were talking about him that time!"

"And I found your conversation very interesting, Master Gamain; and this makes me glad to enjoy it again.

When your memory comes back, I wish to ask you to tell me, if it is not indiscreet, what you were doing an hour ago, stretched at full length across the roadway, and only twenty paces from a freight-wagon, — which might have cut you in two, if I had n't interfered. Were you blue, Master Gamain, and had you taken a fatal resolve to commit suicide?"

"Me? Suicide? Me? Well, I guess not! What was I doing in the middle of the road, — abed in the dirt? Are you sure it was so?"

"Look at yourself!"

Gamain threw an eye over his clothes and said: "Oh ho! Madame Gamain will make a fuss! 'Don't put on thy new clothes. Wear the old blouse! That 's good enough for the Tuileries!' — That 's what she said to me yesterday."

"How? To go to the Tuileries?" said the Unknown. "You were coming from the Tuileries when I met you?"

Gamain scratched his head, trying to recall his scattered senses.

"Yes, yes. There 's it! Certainly I came from the Tuileries. Why not? It was no secret that I was once the teacher of Monsieur Veto."

"How, Monsieur Veto? Whom do you call Monsieur Veto?"

"Well, well! And you did n't know they called the King that? Well, well, where 've you been? In China?"

"What can you expect? I attend to my trade, and don't bother my head with politics."

"You 're lucky! I *do* attend to politics; that is, my trade makes me do it. There 's what ruins me!" and Gamain lifted his eyes piously to the ceiling, and sighed.

"Bah! Were you summoned to Paris for another piece of work, of the same sort you had been doing there the first time I saw you?"

"Precisely! Only, then I did n't know where I went, with my bandaged eyes; but this time, I knew where I was, and kept my eyes open."

"So that you had no difficulty in recognizing the Tuileries?"

"The Tuileries? Who told you I went to the Tuileries?"

"Why, *you* did, just now! How should I know you went to the Tuileries, if you had n't told me?"

"Sure enough," said Gamain to himself. "How should he know it, if I had n't told him?" Then, looking at the Unknown, he added: "Perhaps I did wrong to tell you that; but then, my faith, you 're not everybody, — you! Well, so I told you that? Well, I won't go back on it! I *did* go to the Tuileries."

"And you worked with the King, who gave you the twenty-five louis you have in your pocket."

"Hey? Well, yes, I *had* twenty-five louis in my pocket."

"And have them still, my friend!"

Gamain thrust his hand quickly into the depths of his waistcoat, and drew out a handful of gold, mixed with silver money and a few big copper sous. "Hold on!" he said, "hold on! Five, six, seven! — Good! And I 'd forgotten all about it! — Twelve, thirteen, fourteen! — Twenty-five louis is quite a sum! — Seventeen, eighteen, nineteen! — A sum, as times go, one don't pick up under his horse's hoofs! — Twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five! — Ah! Thank God they 're all here!" and Gamain breathed more freely.

"When I told you so, you seemed to doubt me."

"You? How should you know I had twenty-five louis about me?"

"My dear Monsieur Gamain, I have already had the honor of telling you that I found you lying right in the middle of the highway, only twenty steps ahead of a wagon, which was likely to run straight over you. I called out to the teamster to stop. I then called a passing cab. One of its lanterns I took, and by its light I discovered two or three goldpieces rolling on the ground. As these louis were near the mouth of your pocket, I guessed they had fallen out of it. I put in my hand, and by the score of other louis it contained, I found I was not mistaken. Then the coachman shook his head, and said: 'No, Monsieur, no!' — 'What do you mean by *no?*' — 'No, I can't take that man!' — 'And why not take him?' — 'Because he 's too rich for his dress. Twenty-five gold louis in the pocket of a cotton velvet waistcoat! You can smell the gibbet a league off!' — 'How,' said I, 'you believe him a thief?' — Doubtless the word roused *you.* — '*Thief*, me a thief?' said you. — 'Undoubtedly a thief!' replied the cabman. 'If you 're not a thief, how do you happen to have so many goldpieces in your pocket?' — To which you replied: 'I have twenty-five louis in my pocket, because my pupil, the King of France, gave them to me.' — At these words I thought I remembered you. I held the lantern nearer your face, and said: 'Ah, all is explained. This is Monsieur Gamain, a locksmith from Versailles. He has been at work with the King, and the King has given him twenty-five louis for his pains. I 'll be responsible for him.' — After that the driver made no further objections. I replaced the louis in your pocket. You were properly laid in the cab. Then I mounted the box. We dismounted at this tavern, and, thanks to God, there is

nothing for you to complain of, except that your apprentice abandoned you."

"Did I talk about an apprentice? Me, — complain of his leaving me?" cried the bewildered Gamain, more and more astonished.

"Well, now, — here 's a fellow for you, — who can't remember what he says!"

"Me?"

"Why, yes! Did n't you say, a moment ago, 'It 's all the fault of that stupid —' Well, I forget what you called him — "

"Louis Lecomte?"

"That 's it! You said: 'It 's all the fault of that stupid Louis Lecomte, who promised to go back with me to Versailles, and who, up to the moment when we parted, fairly scorched me with his politeness.' — That 's what you said."

"The fact is, I might well have said so, for it is the truth."

"Well, then, if it 's true, why do you deny it? Don't you know that all these evasions would be dangerous for you in such times as these, — with any other man except myself."

"Yes, but with *you*, — " said Gamain, fawningly.

"With *me!* What do you mean?"

"That is to say, with a *friend.*"

"Ah yes! Great confidence you manifest towards your friend! First you say *yes*, and then you say *no.* First you say a thing is true, and the next minute you say it is n't true. Here, the other day, you told me a story, on your word of honor. Psha! Tell that story to the marines!"

"What story?"

"The story of a secret door you had arranged, in the

house of some great lord, whose address and name you could n't even tell me!"

"Well, you can believe me or not, as you choose; but this time it was another door."

"For the King?"

"For the King. Only, instead of a door on a stairway, it was the door of a closet."

"And you expect me to believe that the King, himself an adept in lockmaking, would send for you to put a lock on a door? Oh, come off!"

"Well, it 's just so! Poor man! To be sure he believed himself able to get on without me. He began his lock. Well, then, — oh Lord! — 'What 's the use of Gamain? Can't we get on without Gamain? Why send for Gamain?' — Oh yes! but he got muddled with those bolts and ridges, and had to send after poor Gamain, after all!"

"So he sent after you by some confidential attendant, — Weber, or Durey, or Hue?"

"That 's where you 're mistaken! He had taken a helper, a companion who knew less about it than himself. Well, one fine morning this companion came to Versailles, and said to me: 'See here, Father Gamain. We have been trying to make a lock, the King and me; but good-night, lock. It won't work.' — 'Well, what do you want of me?' says I. — 'That you shall come to Paris, and put it into shape,' says he. — Says I: 'That 's a humbug! You don't come from the King. You want to get me into a trap!' — Says he: 'That 's all right; so the King has commissioned me to give you twenty-five louis, in order that you sha'n't be in doubt about it.' — 'Twenty-five louis,' says I; 'where are they?' — 'Here they are!' says he; and sure enough, there they were, and he gave them to me."

"And these are the twenty-five louis you have with you?" asked the gunsmith.

"No! These here are another lot. The twenty-five first ones were only on account."

"Pish! Fifty goldpieces for touching up a lock? There must be some fraud underneath all that, Master Gamain!"

"That 's just what I said to myself. Besides, you see that his companion —"

"Well, — his companion!"

"Well, he had the look of a sham. I 'd ought to 've questioned him about the details of his journeyman's tour through France, and what the mother of us all calls herself."

"But you 're not a man to be cheated, when you see an apprentice at his work."

"I don't say he can't work. This feller handled his file and chisel well enough. I saw him cut off a hot iron bar at one blow, bore an eyelet with a rat-tail, as well as if he 'd had a gimlet and a lathe. But you see there was, in all this, more theory than practice. No sooner 'd he finished a bit of work, than he washed his hands; when he washed 'em, they came out white. Do the hands of a genuine locksmith bleach out like that? Bah, I can't wash *mine* out so!" and Gamain proudly displayed his black and callous hands, which seemed able to defy all the almond paste and soaps on earth.

"But," said the Unknown, recurring to the point which seemed to him most interesting, — "once at the King's, what did you do?"

"Well, it appeared that we were expected. They took us to the workshop. The King showed me a lock, not badly begun; but he had come to grief over the ridges. A lock with three ridges, you see! Well, there ain't

many *locksmiths* capable of making one, — much less *kings*, — you understand. I looked at it, and saw what was the matter with it; so, says I: 'Good! Let me alone for an hour, and by that time the lock 'll be all right on its pins.' — Says the King: 'All right, my friend, thou 'rt at home here. There are the files and the pincers. Work, my boy, work,' says he; 'and as for us, we 'll go and get the closet ready.' — Then he went out, along with his devilish comrade."

"By the broad stairway?" carelessly asked Master Gunsmith.

"No, by the small private staircase, which leads directly into his office. — Well, when I 'd done my job, says I to myself: 'That there closet 's a blind! Them two are shut up there together, to concoct some plot or 'nother. I 'll go downstairs very soft. I 'll open the door into the office, — whew, — and then I 'll see what they 're up to,' says I."

"And what were they doing?"

"Doing? Listening, probably! Me? I hain't got the foot of a ballet-master, you understand. I tried to make my tread light as possible; but the stairway creaked under my heels, and I was heard. They made believe just coming after me. The minute I put my hand on the knob, — crick! the door opened! — Who got left? Gamain."

"So you learned nothing?"

"Wait a bit! — 'Ah ha, Gamain, is 't thou?' says the King. — 'Yes, Sire,' says I, 'I 'm done.' — 'And we too,' says he, 'we 're done. Come on, I 've another job for thee;' and he led me rapidly through his study, but not so rapidly but I could see, spread out on the table, a large map, which I know was a map of France, for on one corner of it were the three lilies of the kingdom."

"And you noticed nothing peculiar about that map of France?"

"Oh yes, — three long lines of pins stuck into it. They started from the centre, and ran toward the side of the map, about equal distances apart. You might 'a thought 'em soldiers, marching to the frontier by three different routes."

"Indeed, my dear Gamain," said the Unknown, laughing his appreciation, "you have a perspicacity which nothing escapes. So you think that instead of bothering about that closet, the King and your companion had been studying that big map?"

"Sure on 't!"

"You can't be *sure* of it!"

"But I *am*, though!"

"How so?"

"It 's very simple. The pins had wax heads, — some black, some blue, and others red; and the King thoughtlessly picked his teeth with a red-headed pin, which he happened to have left in his hand."

"Ah Gamain, my friend," said the Unknown, "when I invent something new in gunmaking, I shall not invite you into my cabinet, nor even let you pass through it, — I can assure you of that; unless your eyes are bandaged, as they were the day you were summoned to the grand seigneur's mansion; yet even so, you discovered there were ten main steps, and that the house looked out upon the boulevards."

"Hold on," said Gamain, enchanted with these compliments, "we 're not through yet. There was really a closet!"

"Ah ha! Where was it?"

"Ah yes, where? Guess a little. — Buried in the wall, my friend."

"In which wall?"

"In the wall of the interior passage-way, which connects the King's alcove with the Dauphin's chamber."

"Do you know this is very curious, what you tell me? And that closet is in plain sight?"

"I should say so! — Not much, Monsieur. I looked about with all my eyes, and could see nothing; so I says: 'Where is your closet?' — The King glances about; and says he: 'Gamain, I've always put confidence in thee; and I should n't want anybody else to know this secret. See here!' As he spoke these words, and the 'prentice held the light for us, — for there 's no daylight in that passage-way, — the King moved a panel of the wainscot, and I saw a round hole, two feet in diameter, at its entrance, — or a little more. Seeing my surprise, says he: 'My friend,' and he winked at the apprentice as he spoke, 'thou seest that hole? I've had it made to keep my money in. This young man helped me during the four or five days he spent in the palace. But it is necessary to put a lock on its iron door; and it must be hidden in such a way that when the panel is replaced it will conceal everything. If help is needed, here is this youngster. He will help. Don't want him, hey? Then I'll keep him busy elsewhere, but always in *my* service?' — 'Oh,' says I, 'you know very well, that when I can do a job alone, I ask nobody's help. Here are four hours' work for a workman; but I 'm a master, and I'll do it in three. Go about your own affairs, youngster; and you can attend to yours also, Sire,' says I, 'and if you have anything to lock up in that hole, come back in three hours.' — It must be so, because the King said so, — that our companion went to do some work somewhere else, — for I have n't seen him since. The King returned alone at the end of the three hours, and says: 'Well, Gamain,

where are we?' — 'Done, Sire!' says I; and I let him see the door — which moved as if it enjoyed moving, without the least creak — and the lock, which worked as smooth as one of Vaucanson's automatons. — 'Good enough!' says the King. 'Now, Gamain, thou wilt help me count the money I wish to put away.' Four bags of double louis were brought in by a valet; and says the King, says he: 'Now let 's count 'em!' I accounted for one million, and he for another. There were twenty-five left over, miscounted somehow. — 'Here, Gamain,' says the King, 'these twenty-five louis are for thy pains!' as if it were not a shame to make a man count a million louis, — a poor man with five young ones, — and give him only twenty-five for a recompense! — Say, what do *you* think?"

The Unknown made a motion with his lips. "The fact is, it 's shabby," he said presently; but it may be an open question, to whom he applied the epithet.

"Hold on! That ain't all! I took the twenty-five louis, put 'em into my pocket, and says I: 'Thanks, Sire; but for all that, I have n't ate or drunk since the forenoon, and I 'm direfully thirsty.' I had hardly said this, when the Queen came in through a concealed door, so that all in a minute, before you could say *boo*, there she was, in front of me. She held a napkin in her hand, on which I could see a glass of wine and a cake. — 'My dear Gamain,' says she to me, 'you 're thirsty. Try a glass of wine. You 're hungry. Have a cake.' — 'Ah, Madame Queen,' says I to her, bowing, 'no need to trouble yourself on my account. It ain't worth while.' — Now then, Monsieur Gunsmith, what do you think of that? One glass of wine, for a man who says he 's thirsty, and one cake, for a man who declares himself famished. What was that Queen thinking about? One

can easily see that *she* was never hungry or thirsty. — A glass of wine! Why, it 's stingy!"

"Then you refused it?"

"I should 'a done better to refuse it! No! I drinks it! As to the cake, I twists it up in my handkerchief, and I says: 'What is n't good for the father may be good for his children.' Then I thanked my lady for her pains, and put myself on the road for home, swearing I 'd never go to the Tuileries again."

"Why do you say you should have done better to refuse the wine?"

"Because they must have put poison in it! Hardly had I crossed the Swing Bridge than I was thirsty again, — and such a thirst! It was right there where the river runs along on the left, and the wineshops were at my right. — Ah, it was there I found out the bad quality of the wine they 'd given me. The more I drank, the thirstier I grew. Things went on like that till I lost consciousness. One thing they may be easy about. If ever I 'm called to testify against them, I will say that the King and Queen gave me twenty-five louis, for working four hours and counting a million of money; and then, for fear I should tell where they 'd hid their treasure, they poisoned me like a dog."

This was in fact the very accusation (so it is recorded in history!) which this miserable fellow subsequently made against the Queen, in the presence of the Convention.

"And I can back up your testimony, dear Gamain," said the gunsmith, rising, "by saying that it was I who furnished you with the antidote, thanks to which you have been recalled to life."

"Henceforth it is friendship in life and death between us two," said Gamain, taking the hands of the Unknown in his own.

Refusing for the third or fourth time, with almost Spartan firmness, the wine which the Unknown offered him (for the ammonia had the double effect of sobering him instantly, and disgusting him with wine for twenty-four hours), Gamain, after swearing eternal friendship, resumed his journey to Versailles, which he reached safe and sound, at two in the morning, with the King's twenty-five goldpieces secure in his vest, and the Queen's cake in his coat-pocket.

Lingering later in the cabaret, the sham gunsmith drew from his pocket some tortoise-shell tablets, encrusted with gold, and therein wrote with a pencil this brace of notes:

Behind the King's alcove, in the dark corridor leading to the Dauphin's chamber, an iron closet.

See if this Louis Lecomte, a locksmith's helper, is not simply Count Louis (son of the Marquis de Bouillé), who came from Metz eleven days ago.

CHAPTER XL

DOCTOR GUILLOTIN'S MACHINE.

By the second day afterwards, thanks to the wires (controlled by Cagliostro) among all classes of society, reaching even to the royal household, he knew that the young Count Louis had arrived in Paris in the middle of November; that his presence had been discovered by his cousin Lafayette three days later; that he had been presented to the King on that day; that he had offered his services as a workman to Gamain on the Twenty-second of November; that he remained with him three days; that on the fourth day he went from Versailles to Paris with his master; that they were introduced at once to the King's presence; that young Louis returned afterwards to his lodgings, in the apartments of his friend Achille du Chastelet; that he then changed his costume immediately, and departed the same evening for Metz, posthaste.

The day after Cagliostro's conference with Beausire in Saint John Cemetery, the ex-soldier, much excited, hastened to the banker Zannone's residence at Bellevue.

Returning from the gaming-house at seven o'clock in the morning, after losing his last louis, — despite Law's infallible combination and sequence, — Master Beausire had found his rooms entirely empty, Mademoiselle Oliva and the young Toussaint having disappeared.

Then it came into his mind that Cagliostro had refused to leave the house with him the evening before, because

he had something confidential to say to Olivia. Here was a way open for suspicion. Olivia had certainly been led astray by the Count. A good bloodhound, Beausire put his nose to the ground, and followed the scent as far as Bellevue.

On giving his name, he was at once received by the Baron Zannone, or Count Cagliostro, — whichever the reader, for the moment, pleases to call the principal personage, the kingpin, of the drama which we have undertaken to recount.

Conducted into the same parlor wherewith we became acquainted at the beginning of this narrative, — when Doctor Gilbert and Favras met each other, — Beausire hesitated on finding himself face to face with the Count. Cagliostro appeared such a mighty lord, that Beausire hardly dared reclaim his mistress from him ; but as if he could read the heart of the ex-soldier, the Count said : "I have noted one thing, that you have only two passions in this world, gambling and Mademoiselle Oliva."

"Ah !" cried Beausire, "you know what brings me here ?"

"Perfectly well ! You come to demand Oliva. — She is at my house."

"How, she 's with you ?"

"Yes, in my house in the Rue Saint Claude. She occupies her old apartment there ; and if you 're careful, and I 'm pleased with your behavior, — if you bring me news to interest and amuse me, — at such times I shall give you twenty-five louis for your pocket, wherewith you can visit the gamesters at the Palais Royal, and also buy a coat for your back, in order to visit your mistress in the Rue Saint Claude."

Beausire had a great mind to raise his voice, and demand Oliva ; but Cagliostro said two words about that

miserable affair connected with the Portuguese embassy, — which was always suspended over the ex-soldier's head, like the sword of Damocles, — and Beausire held his peace.

As Beausire manifested some doubt whether Oliva was really at the mansion in the Rue Saint Claude, the Count ordered his carriage, took Beausire with him to that house on the boulevards, and introduced him into the *sanctum sanctorum*, the Holy of Holies. There, by displacing a picture, he allowed Beausire to see, through a skilfully contrived aperture, Mademoiselle Oliva, established like a queen. Seated on a huge sofa, she was reading one of those naughty books so common at that epoch, and which constituted the joy of her life, whenever the former chambermaid of Mademoiselle de Taverney was happy enough to light upon them. Her son Toussaint was attired like the son of a king, with a Henry Fourth hat, caught up with white feathers, and a sky-blue sailor suit, kept in place by a tricolored belt, fringed with gold. He was enjoying some beautiful playthings.

Then Beausire's heart dilated, as a lover and father. He promised whatever the Count desired. Cagliostro agreed that Beausire, whenever he brought important news, should first receive his payment, gold in hand, and then seek the prize of love in the arms of Mademoiselle Olivia.

All was going on as Cagliostro desired, and very much as Beausire wished also, when, towards the end of December, at an hour very unseasonable for that time of the year, — namely, at six in the morning, — Doctor Gilbert, who had already been at work an hour and a half, heard three raps at his door, which he recognized, by their peculiar intervals, as made by a brother in Free Masonry.

He opened the door therefore, and found Cagliostro, with a smile on his lips, standing the other side of it. Gilbert never met this mysterious man, face to face, without a certain shiver. "Ah Count, is it you?" he said; and then, with an effort, extended his hand, saying: "Welcome, at whatever hour you come, and whatsoever cause brings you hither."

"The cause which brings me, my dear Gilbert, is the wish to have you assist in a philanthropic experiment, of which I have already had the honor of speaking to you."

Gilbert in vain tried to remember to what experiment the Count alluded, and finally said: "I do not recollect it."

"Come with me, all the same, my dear Gilbert; for I have not disturbed you for nothing, I assure you. Besides, you will meet noteworthy people in the place to which we are going."

"Dear Count, wherever you wish me to go, I will go, — first, for your sake. The place whither I go, and the people whom I may meet there, are of secondary importance."

"Come then, for we have no time to lose."

Being already dressed, Gilbert needed only to lay down his pen and don his hat. These two operations accomplished, he said: "Count, I am at your service."

"Let us go!" replied the Count, simply; and he walked ahead while Gilbert followed.

A carriage was in waiting, and the two men entered it. As they started rapidly, without any new orders from the Count, it was evident that the coachman already knew where he was to drive. At the expiration of fifteen minutes, during which Gilbert noticed that they crossed the city, and passed through one of the

barriers, the carriage brought up in a large square court-yard, upon which opened two tiers of small, grated windows.

The gate, which had opened to give the vehicle access, closed behind it. As he stepped out, Gilbert perceived that he was in the courtyard of a prison, which presently he recognized as the one named Bicêtre.

The place, already gloomy enough in its natural aspect, was rendered more so by the dubious daylight, which seemed to descend regretfully into that courtyard. It was about quarter past six in the morning, — the worst hour of the winter, because it is the hour when the cold makes itself felt, even by the most vigorous organizations. A foggy rain, fine as crape, was falling diagonally, and made the walls look gray.

Under the lead of their boss, — but under the special direction of a little man clad in black, who gave the signal for every movement, — five or six carpenters were at work, setting up some machine, of a form unknown and queer.

At sight of the new arrivals the little man in black raised his head. Gilbert shuddered, as he recognized Doctor Guillotin, whom he had met in Marat's cellar. This machine was, in fact, a large copy of the one whereof Gilbert had seen a small model in the home of the editor of "The Friend of the People."

On his side, the little man recognized Cagliostro and Gilbert; and the arrival of these two personages seemed sufficiently important for him to leave the work for an instant, and come to greet them; but he did not do this without bidding the master carpenter give his best attention to the work in hand.

"There, there, Master Guidon, that 's very well. Arrange the platform first. The platform 's the base of

the structure. When the platform 's done, then set up the two posts, and be sure and follow the building-marks on the timber, so that the posts shall be neither too far apart nor too near. For the rest, — well, I shall be close by, and sha' n't lose sight of you."

Then approaching Gilbert and Cagliostro, who met him half-way, he said: "Good-day, Baron. It is very kind of you to come first, and bring the Doctor. Doctor, you will remember that when we met at Marat's, I invited you to share this experiment; only I afterwards forgot your address. You will see something very curious, — the most philanthropic machine ever invented."

Suddenly turning towards the machine, the object of his dearest hopes, he exclaimed: "Here, here, Guidon, what are you about? You 're putting it wrong end foremost."

Rushing up the ladder, which two of his assistants had placed against one side of the scaffolding, he was on the platform in an instant, and there his presence served to correct, in a few seconds, the errors committed by the mechanics, — not yet well posted as to the working of this new-fangled machine.

"There, there!" said the Doctor, seeing with satisfaction that everything was now going according to his directions, "there, there! Now the cutter must be placed between the grooves. — Guidon, Guidon," he exclaimed suddenly, as if struck with fear, "why are n't the grooves faced with copper?"

"It was this way, Doctor. I thought that good oak, thoroughly dry, would do as well as copper," replied the master carpenter.

"Oh yes, there it is!" replied the Doctor, disdainfully. "Economy, always economy! — when it is a question of the progress of science and the good of humanity. Guidon,

if our experiment fails to-day, I shall hold you responsible. — Gentlemen, I call you to witness," continued the Doctor, addressing Cagliostro and Gilbert, — "I call you to witness that I ordered copper-lined grooves, and that I protest against the omission of the copper; so if the cutter catches on its way down, or slides badly, it is not my fault, and I wash my hands of it." As he spoke, the Doctor, standing there on the platform of his machine, made the same gesture which was made by Pontius Pilate, on the terrace of his palace, 1700 years before.

At last, despite these little annoyances, the machine was set up, and took on a certain homicidal air, which delighted its inventor, but which chilled Doctor Gilbert.

As to Cagliostro, he remained unmoved; for ever since the death of Lorenza, this man had become marble.

This is the form which the machine now assumed.

First there was a staging, reached by a short step-ladder. This staging, like a scaffold, furnished a platform, measuring some fifteen feet on each side. On this platform, about two-thirds back, and facing the stairs, rose two parallel posts, ten or twelve feet high.

These two posts were ornamented with the famous grooves, from which Master Guidon had economically withheld the copper, — a saving which, as we know, roused the regrets of the philanthropist, Doctor Guillotin.

When released by means of a spring, a crescent-shaped cutter, or knife, was allowed to fall precipitously, its own natural force being augmented a hundred-fold by additional weights placed upon it.

Between the two posts was a small opening. There were two leaves in this opening, and when a man's head was thrust between them, they closed together about the neck, like a collar. A movable board, composed of a

plank as long as the height of an ordinary man, was so hinged as to move up and down at the proper time. When turned down, this plank came upon a level with this opening before described.

This was all very ingenious, as one could readily see.

While the carpenters, Master Guidon, and the Doctor were putting the last touches to the erection of their machine, Cagliostro and Gilbert were discussing the problematical novelty of this instrument, — the Count disputing the originality of the invention, whereto he found something analogous in the Italian *mannaya*, and especially in the *doloire* of Toulouse, used in the execution of Marshal Montmorency, whereof Puységur says: "In this country they make use of a *doloire*, or knife placed between two pieces of wood. When a head is placed on the block, some one loosens the cord, and the knife descends, and separates the head from the body."

Meanwhile new spectators entered the yard, undoubtedly summoned to assist in the experiment.

There was first an old man of our acquaintance, who has played an active part in this long narrative. Touched with a malady wherewith he must soon die, he yet left his chamber, — at the urgency of his confrère Guillotin, and in spite of the bad weather, — in order to see this machine work. Gilbert recognized him, and advanced respectfully to meet him. He was accompanied by Giraud, city architect of Paris, who, by reason of his public position, had been favored with a particular invitation.

The second group — saluting nobody, and by nobody saluted — was composed of four men, very plainly dressed. As soon as they entered, these four men took their places in the corner of the yard farthest removed from Gilbert

and Cagliostro, and humbly remained there, talking in low tones, and standing hat in hand, notwithstanding the rain.

He who appeared to be chief among the four, and to whom the others listened with deference, as he spoke some words in a bass voice, was a man fifty or fifty-two years old. He was tall in stature, and had a benevolent smile and an open countenance. This man was Charles Louis Sanson. He was born on February 15, 1738. He saw his father cut Damiens in quarters; and he also aided him, when he had the honor of cutting off the head of Lally Tollendal. Sanson was commonly called *Monsieur de Paris*. The three other men were his son — who was subsequently to have the honor of aiding in the decapitation of Louis Sixteenth — and his two assistants.

The presence of Monsieur de Paris, his son, and two assistants, lent a terrible eloquence to Guillotin's machine, showing that the experiment was to be made, if not with the guaranty of the government, at least with its approbation.

For the moment Monsieur de Paris appeared somewhat sad. If the machine should be adopted, which he came to see, the picturesque side of his profession would be curtailed. The executioner would no longer appear to the crowd as the Destroying Angel, armed with a flaming sword, — like him who stood at the gate of Eden, to guard it from those who had rebelled against Jehovah. On the contrary, the headsman would appear like a sort of house-porter, pulling the latchstring for the dead, instead of the living. Therein lay Sanson's real objection to the invention.

As the misty rain continued to fall, not so penetratingly, but more steadily, Doctor Guillotin — who doubt-

less feared lest the bad weather should keep away some of his spectators — addressed the most important group, comprising Cagliostro, Gilbert, Doctor Louis, and Architect Giraud, and said to them, like a manager who scents the public impatience: "Gentlemen, we only wait for one person, Doctor Cabanis. When he comes, we will begin."

Hardly were these words out of his mouth than a third vehicle entered the yard, from which emerged a man thirty-eight or forty years old, with a high forehead, intelligent face, and a vivid, inquisitive eye. This was the last visitor expected, Doctor Cabanis. He saluted everybody, with an affable air, such as becomes a medical philosopher, and hastened to offer his hand to Guillotin, who cried, from his place on the platform, "Come then, Doctor, come on. We only waited for you." Then Cabanis mingled in the group with Cagliostro and Gilbert, while the carriage ranged itself with the other two carriages. As to the cab of Monsieur de Paris, that remained modestly outside the gate.

"Gentlemen," said Guillotin, "as nobody else is expected, we will begin at once."

At a sign from his hand a door opened, through which came two men, clad in a sort of gray uniform, carrying on their shoulders a sack, beneath whose folds one could see the outline of the human form.

Behind the panes of the small windows could be seen the pale faces of certain prisoners, whom nobody had dreamed of inviting, but who nevertheless watched the unexpected and terrible spectacle, though understanding neither the apparatus nor its object.

CHAPTER XLI.

A SOIRÉE IN THE PAVILLON DE FLORE.

On the evening of the same day, — that is, on Christmas Eve, — there was a reception in the Floral Pavilion.

The Queen, not wishing to hold receptions in her own apartments, the Princess Lamballe received for her, and did the honors of the circle until the Queen arrived. After her Majesty came, everything went on as if they were in the Marsan Pavilion, instead of the Floral.

In the course of the morning the young Baron Isidore de Charny had returned from Turin. As soon as his arrival was known, he was admitted first to the King's presence, and then to the Queen's.

Both received him with extreme friendliness, but especially the Queen, whose noticeable good-will arose from two causes. In the first place, Isidore was Charny's brother; and Charny being absent, it was a great pleasure for the Queen to see his brother. In the next place, Isidore came from the royal relatives, the Comte d'Artois and the Prince de Condé, and brought with him their messages, which were only too much in harmony with ideas cherished in the Queen's own heart.

The Princes commended to the Queen the projects of Favras. They invited her to profit by the devotion of this courageous gentleman, and come at once to Turin. Isidore was also commissioned to express to Favras, in the name of the Princes, their full sympathy with his plans, their approval thereof, and their best wishes for his success.

The Queen kept Isidore with her for an hour, and invited him to come in the evening to Madame Lamballe's circle; and she only permitted him to retire, when he asked leave to go and discharge his all-important errand to Favras.

The Queen said nothing positive in regard to the project of flight; only she charged Isidore to repeat to Monsieur and Madame de Favras, what she had already said when she received Madame at their first meeting, and had repeated when she so abruptly entered the King's rooms, and found Monsieur de Favras there.

After leaving the Queen, Isidore betook himself at once to the abiding-place of Favras, who lived at Number Twenty-one in Place Royale.

He was received by Madame, who at first told him that her husband was out; but when she noted the name of her visitor, and learned what august personages he had just interviewed, and what others he had left five or six days before, she acknowledged that her husband was in the house, and sent for him.

The Marquis came in with a frank look and a smiling eye, for he knew in whose behalf Isidore had come.

The message from the Queen filled the heart of the young conspirator with joy. Everything encouraged his hopes. The plot was going on marvellously well. Twelve hundred horsemen were already assembled at Versailles. Each of them could carry a foot-soldier on his crupper, and this would make twenty-four hundred instead of twelve hundred.

As to the triple assassination of Necker, Bailly, and Lafayette, to be undertaken simultaneously by the three columns, — entering Paris, one by the Roule Barrier, another by the Grenelle Barrier, and the third by the Chaillot Gate, — this had been relinquished, as it was

thought sufficient for their purpose if they should dispose of Lafayette alone.

For this expedition, four men would be enough, provided they were well mounted and well armed. These four were to await Lafayette's carriage at eleven o'clock in the evening, the time when he usually left the Tuileries. Two of them would take positions on the right and left of the street, while the other two would place themselves in front of the carriage.

One of these, holding a letter in his hand, would make a sign for the driver to stop, declaring that he had an important communication for the General. When the carriage stopped, the General would naturally put his head out of one of the windows, and immediately the conspirator would blow his brains out with a pistol.

This was the only special change made in the scheme. The other arrangements were unaltered. As money had been disbursed and the men notified, the King had only to say *yes;* and at a sign from Favras he would be carried off.

Only one thing disquieted the Marquis, — the silence of the King and Queen in regard to this affair. The Queen's silence was now broken by the intervention of Isidore; and vague as were the words transmitted through him to Monsieur and Madame de Favras, these words, coming from a royal mouth, became vastly important.

Isidore promised to report to the King and Queen, that evening, an assurance of the devotion of Favras.

The young Baron, as we know, had left for Turin on the very day of his arrival in Paris, early in October; and he consequently had no lodging, except the chamber belonging to his brother, in the Tuileries; and that brother being absent, Isidore had the chamber opened by the Count's lackey.

At nine in the evening he entered Madame de Lamballe's apartments. He had never been introduced to the Princess, and she did not know him by sight; but having been forewarned of his visit during the day, by a word from the Queen, the Princess arose when his name was announced. With that charming grace which, in her, took the place of wit, she drew him at once into the circle of her intimate friends.

The King and Queen had not yet arrived. Monsieur de Provence, who appeared very uneasy, was talking in the corner with two gentlemen of his inner circle of friends, De la Châtre and D'Avaray. Louis de Narbonne went from one group to another, with the ease of a man who feels himself in his own family.

This circle of intimates was made up of young gentlemen who had resisted the mania for emigration. There was Lameth, who was so much to the Queen, and had never taken part against her. There was D'Ambly, one of the best or worst men of that epoch, according to one's point of view. There were De Castries and De Fersen; and there was Suleau, chief editor of that witty journal, "The Acts of the Apostles." All these had loyal hearts, but hot heads, and some of them were feather-brained.

Isidore was acquainted with none of these gentlemen; but when his name was announced, and the Princess honored him with so much affability, all hands were outstretched to him.

Besides, he brought news from that other France, which had established itself in a foreign city. Each of these young men had a relative or friend with the exiled Princes in Turin. Isidore had seen everybody there, and was consequently a sort of second Gazette.

We have indicated Suleau as chief among these men. He was leading the conversation, which roused great

laughter. Suleau had been present that day, at the session of the Assembly. Guillotin had mounted the tribune, vaunted the advantages of the machine he had devised, described the triumphant trial of it made that very morning, and demanded the privilege of substituting it for all the other instruments of death, which had successively stained the Place de Grève, — the wheel, the gallows, the stake, the rack. Seduced by the smoothness of his machine, the Assembly was quite ready to adopt it.

Apropos to this theme, Suleau had written some verses, to the air of the *Exaudet Minuet*, which were to appear next day in his journal.

This song, which he sang in a low voice to the jovial circle about him, provoked such free laughter, that the King, who was coming in with the Queen, heard it in the antechamber; and as he, poor King! could laugh no longer, he promised himself to inquire what possible subject had been found provocative of so much gayety in such a sorry time.

Needless to say, as soon as one usher announced the King, and another the Queen, that all whispering, all conversation, and all bursts of laughter ceased, giving place to respectful silence.

The two royal personages entered. At that time, when the genius of Revolution despoiled royalty of many privileges, one by one, these outward tokens of respect were augmented in private, especially by all true Royalists, to whose courtesy the royal misfortunes lent new force. The year 1789 witnessed great ingratitude; but 1793 witnessed supreme devotion.

Madame de Lamballe and Madame Elizabeth joined the Queen.

Monsieur walked up to the King to present his re-

spects, and, as he bowed, said to him: "My brother, can we not make up a special party, yourself, the Queen, myself, and one of your friends, to the end that we may converse confidentially, under cover of a game of whist?"

"Willingly, my brother," replied the King. "Arrange it with the Queen."

Monsieur approached Marie Antoinette, to whom Charny was offering his respects, and saying, in a low voice: "Madame, I have seen Favras, and have communications of the highest importance for your Majesty."

"My dear sister," interrupted *Monsieur*, "the King desires us to make a card-party of four. We two will unite against yourself, and leave you to choose your own partner."

"Very well," replied the Queen, who suspected that whist was only a pretext, "my choice is made. Monsieur Baron de Charny, you will join our game; and while we play, you can give us the news from Turin."

"Ah, you come from Turin, Baron?" said *Monsieur*.

"Yes, Monseigneur; and in returning from Turin, I came by way of Place Royale, where I saw a man most devoted to the King, the Queen, and your Royal Highness."

Monsieur blushed, coughed, and went farther away. He was a man so full of circumspection, that a straightforward mind disconcerted him. He glanced at De la Châtre, who drew near. After receiving some orders in a low voice, De la Châtre left the room.

Meanwhile the King saluted the gentlemen, and the few ladies, who frequented these receptions at the Tuileries, and in return received their homage. Then the Queen took his arm, and drew him towards the card-table.

He approached the table, looked for the fourth player, and perceived Isidore.

"Ah, Monsieur de Charny," he said, "in the absence of your brother, is it you who make up our table? He could not be better replaced, and you are welcome."

By a sign he bade the Queen be seated, sat down himself, and *Monsieur* after him. Then the Queen, in her turn, made a sign of invitation to Isidore, who took the last place.

Madame Elizabeth ensconced herself on a small sofa behind the King, and leaned both arms on the back of his armchair.

They played two or three hands of whist, speaking only the words sacred to the game. At last, though still playing, the Queen — having remarked that respect was keeping everybody conveniently aloof from the royal table — ventured to say to *Monsieur:* "My brother, has the Baron told you that he is just from Turin?"

"Yes," replied *Monsieur*, "he mentioned it."

"He told you that Artois and Condé strongly urge us to join them?"

The King let an impatient movement escape him.

"Brother, I beg you to listen!" whispered Madame Elizabeth, with the sweetness of an angel.

"And you also, my sister?" said the King.

"I, more than anybody else, dear Louis; for, more than anybody else, I love you, and am uneasy about you."

"I also added," Isidore ventured to say, "that I had returned by way of Place Royale, and remained an hour at number twenty-one."

"At number twenty-one?" asked the King. "What is going on there?"

"At number twenty-one dwells a gentleman devoted

to your Majesty, as we all are, — ready to die for your Majesty, as are all of us, — but who, more active than all others, has arranged a plan — "

"What plan, Monsieur?" demanded the King, raising his head.

"If I should have the misfortune to displease the King, by repeating to his Majesty what I know of this project, I will hold my peace."

"No, no, Monsieur," said the Queen, hastily. "Speak! People enough form projects *against* us. It is at least well for us to know those who conspire on our side, — that in pardoning our enemies, we may also remember our friends. Tell us, Baron, who is this gentleman?"

"The Marquis de Favras."

"Ah," said the Queen, "we know him. And you believe in his devotion, Baron?"

"In his devotion? Yes, Madame! Not only do I believe in it, but I am sure of it."

"Look out, Monsieur," said the King, "you are going too far!"

"The heart judges with the heart, Sire. I answer for the devotion of Favras. As to the excellence of his project, as to his chances of success, — oh, that is another thing. I am too young and too prudent to put forth any opinion on such a subject, especially when it concerns the welfare of the King and Queen."

"And this project, let us hear what it is!" said the Queen.

"Madame, it is ready for execution. If it pleases the King this evening to speak a word or make a sign, to-morrow, at the same hour, he may be at Péronne."

The King kept silence. *Monsieur* twisted the spine of a poor knave of hearts, who could not very well help himself.

"Sire," said the Queen to her husband, "do you hear what the Baron says?"

"Of course I hear," replied the King, scowling.

"And you, my brother?" she asked *Monsieur*.

"I am not more deaf than the King."

"Well, what do you say to it? At least it is a definite proposition!"

"Undoubtedly," said *Monsieur*, "undoubtedly!" Then turning to Isidore, he added: "Repeat that pretty suggestion."

Isidore replied: "I said that if the King would pronounce the word, or make but a sign, he might be at Péronne within twenty-four hours, thanks to the measures taken by Favras."

"Well, my brother," asked *Monsieur*, "is it not tempting, what the Baron proposes?"

The King turned sharply to *Monsieur* and looked at him searchingly. "If I go, will you go with me?"

"I?"

"Yes, you, my brother of Provence," said the King. "You want me to pledge myself to quit Paris. I repeat my question: If I go, will you go with me?"

"I — but," stammered *Monsieur*, "I was not aware. — None of my preparations are made."

"How? You were not *aware*," said the King, "when you furnished Favras with the money! None of your preparations are made, when you have been informed, hour by hour, as to every point in this plot?"

"This plot?" repeated *Monsieur*, growing pale.

"Undoubtedly, this plot; for it is a conspiracy, — a conspiracy so real, that if it is discovered, Monsieur de Favras will be imprisoned, tried at the Châtelet, and condemned to death, — unless, by solicitations and money, you can save him, as we saved Besenval."

"But if the King could save Besenval, he can rescue Favras also."

"No! What I did for the one, I probably cannot do for the other. Besides, Besenval was *my* man, as Favras is *yours*. Let each save his own, my brother, and we shall both have done our duty."

As he spoke, the King rose, but the Queen held him by the flap of his coat.

"Sire," she said, "whether you accept or refuse, you owe Favras some response."

"I?"

"Yes, something which the Baron de Charny may convey to Favras in the King's name."

"He responds," said Louis Sixteenth, disengaging his coat from the Queen's grasp, "the King responds, that he will not allow himself to be abducted!" And with these words his Majesty walked away.

"That is to say," said *Monsieur*, "if Favras abducts the King without permission, he is welcome to do so, — especially if he succeeds; for whoever fails is a fool, and, in politics, fools deserve double punishment."

"Monsieur de Charny," said the Queen, "this evening, without loss of time, run after Favras, and tell him the King's exact words, — *the King will not allow himself to be abducted.* It is for Favras to comprehend these words, or for you to explicate them. — Go!"

The Baron, who, not without reason, regarded the King's response and the Queen's advice as a double consent, took his hat, went out hurriedly, and threw himself into a cab, bidding the driver take him to Royal Square, number twenty-one.

CHAPTER XLII.

WHAT THE QUEEN HAD SEEN IN A DECANTER TWENTY YEARS BEFORE AT THE TAVERNEY CHÂTEAU.

When the King left the card-table, he walked towards the group of young fellows, whose joyous laughter had attracted his attention before he entered the room.

At his approach a noticeable silence prevailed in the group, so that he asked: "Well, gentlemen, is the King so unhappy that he carries sadness wherever he goes?"

"Sire!—" murmured the young men.

"Your gayety was lively enough, and your mirth buoyant, when we came in a while ago, the Queen and myself." Then, shaking his head, he added: "Woe to kings, in whose presence none dare laugh!"

"Sire,—the respect,—" began Monsieur de Lauzun—

"My dear Charles," interrupted the King, "when you used to leave your seminary on Sundays or Thursdays, and I bade you seek recreation at Versailles, did you deprive yourself of laughter, because I was there? I said a minute ago, Woe to the king, before whom none dare be merry. Now I say, Happy the king, in whose presence men may laugh."

"Sire," said Monsieur de Castries, "the subject, which afforded us so much mirth, might not appear so comical to your Majesty."

"Of what were you talking, gentlemen?"

"Sire," said Suleau, coming forward, "I deliver the culprit to your Majesty."

"Ah, Monsieur Suleau! I have read the last number of your 'Acts of the Apostles.' Have a care! Have a care!"

"Of what, Sire?" demanded the young journalist.

"You are a little too much of a Royalist. You might easily get yourself into a bad scrape with the lover of Mademoiselle Théroigne."

"With Monsieur Populus," laughingly asked Suleau.

"Precisely. By the way, what has become of the heroine of that poem?"

"Théroigne?"

"Yes. I hear nothing of her nowadays."

"Sire, I believe she thinks our Revolution does not get on fast enough, and has gone to hurry up the Revolution in Brabant. Your Majesty is doubtless aware that this chaste amazon is at Liége?"

"No, I did not know it. Is this what you were laughing at just now?"

"No, Sire, but about the National Assembly."

"Ah ha, gentlemen! Then you did well to become serious when you saw me. I can't allow anybody in *my* house to laugh at the National Assembly. To be sure," added the King, by way of compromise, "I am not now at home, but in the apartments of the Princess Lamballe; so if you laugh at that no longer, or even laugh at it very softly, you can still tell me what made you laugh so loud awhile ago."

"Does the King know what question was agitated to-day at the session of the National Assembly?"

"Yes, and that makes me even more interested. Was there not under consideration a new machine for the execution of criminals?"

"Offered by Doctor Guillotin to the nation! Yes, Sire," said Suleau.

"Oh Monsieur! and you were ridiculing Guillotin, a philanthropist? You forget that I am a philanthropist myself."

"Oh Sire, I do not forget! There are philanthropists *and* philanthropists. For instance, there is, at the head of the French nation, a philanthropist who has abolished the preparatory suffering, the examination of prisoners under torture. Such a philanthropist we respect, we venerate; nay, we do more, we love him, Sire."

All the young fellows bowed low, as by common consent.

"But," continued Suleau, "there are other philanthropists who, being already physicians, and having in their hands the means, more or less skilful, for disposing of sick folks, are still seeking some means of getting rid of the well ones. Faith, Sire, I beg you to leave such philanthropists to my tender mercies."

"And what would you do with them, — behead them *without suffering?*" asked the King, alluding to the claim set forth by Doctor Guillotin. "Would they quit this world with only *a slight coolness* about their necks?"

"Sire, that is precisely what I wish for them, but that is not what I have promised them."

"How? What you wish for them?" said the King.

"Yes, Sire! I wish that all fellows who invent such machines might be the first to try them. I do not pity Master Aubriot very much, because he had a chance to test the walls of the Bastille; nor Messire Enguerrand de Marigny, who was the first to enjoy the gibbet at Montfaucon. Fortunately I have not the honor of being a magistrate. It is therefore probable that I shall be obliged, in the presence of the respectable Guillotin, to confine myself to what I have promised him, and have already begun to accomplish."

"And what have you promised, — or rather, what have you done?"

"Well, the notion struck me that this great benefactor of humanity ought to derive some recompense from the benefaction itself; so to-morrow morning — in the copy of my 'Acts of the Apostles,' which is being printed to-night — a christening will take place. It is but just that the child of Monsieur Guillotin — recognized to-day as such publicly, by its father, in the presence of the National Assembly — should be named *Mademoiselle Guillotine.*"

Even the King could not help smiling.

"And as there is never a marriage or baptism without its song," said Lameth, "Suleau has made a couple of songs for his godchild."

"Two?" said the King.

"Sire," said Suleau, "the poet must suit all tastes."

"And to what melody have you set these songs? *I* can think of nothing so suitable as the funereal chant, *De Profundis*, — 'Out of the Depths.'"

"Oh, your Majesty! You forget the pleasure it will be to have one's throat cut by the daughter of Monsieur Guillotin, — that is, if he thrusts his head into her doorway. No, Sire! One of my songs is set to an air which is just now all the rage, the *Exaudet Minuet.* The other takes in several melodies, — a sort of mixture."

"And may one have a foretaste of your poesy?" asked the King.

Suleau bowed and said: "I do not belong to the National Assembly, and therefore do not presume to limit the authority of my King. No, I am an obedient subject of your Majesty; and my opinion is, that the King should have whatever he wishes."

"Very well, I am listening."

"Sire, I obey," said Suleau; and he sang, in a low voice, the following ditty, to the melody called the *Exaudet Minuet*, as we have said:

Guillotin,
Deep-learned man, —
Politician
And physician, —
Took a shine, one morning fine,
Hanging not to deem divine,
Nor his country's mission.

In a trice,
His device, —
Such a beauty! —
Having neither rope nor stress,
Must the hangman's art suppress,
And his duty.

All in vain a few may teach,
This the craft of envious leach, —
To uphold
The school of old
Hippocrates, —
The trade to swift monopolize,
Of dealing death to convict flies,
For frequent fees,
All at their ease.

[1] This somewhat rough version of these Revolutionary songs is furnished by the Translator, with the hope of reproducing, in some degree, not merely the ideas of Suleau's stanzas, but their satire, spirit, metrical rhythm, and recurrent rhymes; and to this end all attempts at poetic sentiment have been subordinated. It may be helpful, for those unacquainted with French, to know that the final syllable *in*, in such words as *Guillotin*, is always so pronounced as nearly to rhyme with our word *man*. Except where two or three lines have been added, so as to convey the whole meaning, this translation follows the French verses pretty carefully, though the Translator is fully aware of its many deficiencies.

Our doctor bold —
As we are told,
This work to do —
Consulted with his colleagues suave,
Chapelier, and eke Barnave, —
The headsman too.

Straightway stands,
From his hands,
This machine, —
Which with ease may slay us all,
And which, after him, we call,
Guillotine!

The laughter of the young fellows redoubled. Although these verses did not appear so very amusing to the King; yet, as Suleau was one of his most steadfast adherents, he did not wish that journalist to note the peculiar feeling which agitated the royal heart, and which the King himself could not account for; so he said, "But, my dear Suleau, you spoke of *two* songs. You have given us the *godfather*. Now for the *godmother* at the baptism."

"Sire," responded Suleau, "the godmother awaits the honor of an introduction. She marches to the tune, *Paris est au Roi.*"

Monsieur Guillotin,
The medicine-man,
Whom the good of his race
Must ever engage, —
Advances apace,
With demeanor so sage,
And the word for the age, —
Prompt suggesting
A small blessing, —
Interesting, —

In words not prolix;
But his phrases
Win him praises,
From fools five or six, —
Grandiloquent tricks!

"Dear gents, who safely lead us! —
For every human flaw,
Your wisdom hath decreed us
Equality in law.
Awhile if you deign to listen,
Persuaded you soon must be,
That if it is cruel to hang men,
Far worse to be hanged it must be.

"What shall be done?
When a worthy citizen,
In choler or in fun,
Assassinates his neighbor,
What shall be done?

"To benefit is my intention,
And drag you through these straits,
And so I have made an invention,
Which quick decapitates.

"'T is a blow which is received,
Ere one hears it popping;
Scarcely is the cut perceived, —
One sees next to nothing.

"A hidden spring, with a boost,
All of a sudden unloosed,
Sets gliding,
Ding — ding!
Sets shying,
Ying — ying!
Sends gliding,
Sends shying,
Sends flying
The head.
Very little to dread!"

"Well, gentlemen, you laugh," said the King; "nevertheless, this machine is intended to spare condemned criminals much suffering. What does society ask, when it demands the death of the guilty? Solely and simply this, — the suppression of the individual. If that suppression is accompanied by suffering, as with the wheel or the rack, then punishment is no longer justice; it is vengeance."

"But, Sire," observed Suleau, "who can assure your Majesty that suffering is diminished by the severance of the head thus from the body? Who can say whether life does not survive in both sections, the trunk and the head, and that the dying person may not suffer doubly, having a horrible consciousness of his duality?"

"That is a fair question for discussion among the members of the faculty. — By the way, an experiment was made at the Bicêtre Prison, this very morning, I believe. Was no one of you gentlemen present at that experiment?"

"No, Sire! No, no, no!" exclaimed a dozen or fifteen merry voices, almost simultaneously.

"I was there, Sire," said a graver voice.

The King turned and saw Gilbert, who had entered during the conversation, had respectfully drawn near, but had stood silent till now, when he suddenly answered the King's interrogation.

"Ah Doctor," said the King, with a shudder, "so you were there."

"Yes, Sire."

"And how did the experiment succeed?"

"Perfectly well, with the first two subjects, Sire; but with the third, though the vertebral column was cut, it was still necessary to use a knife in severing the head entirely from the body."

The young men listened with open mouths and horrified eyes.

"How, Sire," said Charles Lameth, evidently speaking for the others, as well as for himself, "three men were executed this morning?"

"Yes, gentlemen," said the King; "only these three men were three corpses, sent from the hospital, Hôtel Dieu. — And your opinion, Gilbert?"

"As to what, Sire?"

"As to the instrument."

"Sire, it is evidently a great improvement on any machine for this purpose hitherto invented; but the accident, which happened to the third victim, proves that the machine needs perfecting."

"And how is it constructed," asked the King, whose instinct for mechanism was at once aroused.

Thereupon Gilbert endeavored to give some description; but as the King could not understand the exact shape of the instrument, even from the Doctor's explanation, he said: "Come, come, Doctor. Here, on this table, are quills, ink, and paper. You draw, I believe?"

"Yes, Sire!"

"Make me an outline, and I shall understand better." As the young gentlemen, restrained by their respect for the King, did not venture to follow without an invitation, he added: "Come, gentlemen, come. This subject is one which should interest all mankind."

"And then who knows," said Suleau, in a low voice, "if one of us is not destined for the honor of espousing Mademoiselle Guillotine? Come, gentlemen, let us make the acquaintance of our future bride."

Following Gilbert and the King they clustered about the table, where (by the King's bidding) Gilbert seated himself, the better to draw his design.

He began the sketch of the machine, and Louis followed every line with the closest attention. Nothing was wanting, — neither the platform, the stairway which led to it, the two upright beams, the movable plank, the little aperture, nor the crescent-shaped blade.

Gilbert was finishing this last detail, when the King stopped him. "Parbleu! It is not surprising the experiment failed, especially with the third trial."

"Why so?" asked Gilbert.

"On account of the shape of the cutter," replied the King. "It was certainly no mechanic's idea, to give the crescent shape to a blade intended for cutting any material likely to offer much resistance."

"But what form would your Majesty have given to it?"

"It is very simple, — a triangle."

Gilbert undertook to correct his sketch.

"Not so, not that way," said the King. "Give me your quill."

"Sire, here is the quill and the chair," said Gilbert, rising.

"See here, see here!" said King Louis, carried away by his fondness for mechanism. "Bring the steel to a point, so, — like a wedge. Bevel it, thus, — so — and so! Then, I warrant you it will cut off twenty-five heads, one after the other, without a rebuff from one of them."

He had hardly uttered these words when a piercing cry — a cry of fright, almost of despair — sounded just above his head. He turned quickly and saw the Queen, pale, distracted, reeling, as she fell fainting into Gilbert's arms.

Urged by curiosity, like the others, she had approached the table, and was leaning on the King's chair, looking over his shoulder, at the very instant when he added his correction to the sketch. She instantly recognized the

hideous machine, of which Cagliostro had made her see the image, twenty years before, at the Château de Taverney.

At this sight she had only strength enough to scream; and then, as if life had already abandoned her, — by the fatal operation of the machine itself, — she fell, as already related, into the arms of Gilbert.

NOTE. — The original of the two Guillotine songs is here appended.

SONG FIRST.

Guillotin,
Médecin
Politique,
Imagine, un beau matin,
Que pendre est inhumain,
Et peu patriotique.

Aussitôt
Il lui faut
Un supplice,
Qui, sans corde ni poteau,
Supprime du bourreau
L'office.

C'est en vain que l'on publie
Que c'est pure jalousie
D'un suppôt
u tripot
D'Hippocrate,
Qui du tuer impunément,
Même exclusivement,
Se flatte.

Le Romain
Guillotin,
Qui s'apprête,
Consulte gens du métier,
Barnave et Chapelier,
Même le coupe-tête;

Et sa main
Fait soudain
La machine,
Que simplement nous tûra,
Et que l'on nommera :
Guillotine.

SONG SECOND.

Monsieur Guillotin,
Ce grand médecin,
Que l'amour du prochain
Occupe sans fin,
S'avance soudain,
Prend la parole enfin,
Et, d'un air bénin,
Il propose
Peu de chose,
Qu'il expose
En peu de mots ;
Mais l'emphase
De sa phrase
Obtient les bravos
De cinq ou six sots.

" Messieurs, dans votre sagesse,
Si vous avez décrété,
Pour toute humaine faiblesse,
La loi de l'égalité,
Pour peu qu'on daigne m'entendre,
On sera bien convaincu,
Que, s'il est cruel de pendre,
Il est dur d'être pendu.

" Comment donc faire,
Quand un honnête citoyen,
Dans un mouvement de colère,
Assassinera son prochain ?
Comment donc faire ?
En rêvant à la sourdine,
Pour vous tirer d'embarras,
J'ai fait une machine,
Qui met les têtes à bas !

"C'est un coup que l'on reçoit,
Avant qu'on s'en doute ;
À peine on s'en aperçoit,
Car on n'y voit goutte ;
Un certain ressort caché,
Tout à coup étant lâché,
Fait tomber !
Ber ! ber !
Fait sauter !
Ter ! ter !
Fait tomber,
Fait sauter
Fait voler
La tête !
C'est bien plus honnête !"

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE PHYSICIAN FOR THE BODY AND THE PHYSICIAN FOR THE SOUL.

One can readily understand that such an occurrence inevitably interrupted the soirée.

Although nobody could assign any cause for the Queen's swoon, the fact remained, that as soon as she had looked at the design drawn by Gilbert, and retouched by the King, the Queen fainted.

When this was known throughout the room, all retired, except those who belonged to the household, or were among the special friends of the royal family.

Gilbert gave his first attention to the Queen. Madame Lamballe would not consent to have her removed to the royal apartments. Indeed this would have been difficult, as Madame Lamballe lived in the Pavillon de Flore, while the Queen occupied the Pavillon Marsan, and it would have been necessary to carry the lifeless body the whole length of the palace.

The royal invalid was consequently placed on a lounge in the bedroom of the Princess, who — having divined, with the intuition peculiar to women, that there was something mysterious and dark concealed beneath this unexpected event — sent everybody away, even the King, and stood at the foot of the couch, with a tender but anxious mien, awaiting the moment when, thanks to Gilbert's remedies, the Queen should recover her senses.

Now and then the Princess asked the Doctor a question; but he was powerless to hasten the Queen's recovery, and could only tranquillize her friend with commonplace assurances.

For some time the shock to the poor Queen's nervous system was so intense that the application of smelling-salts to her nose and of vinegar to her temples was insufficient to restore her to life; but at last a slight cramp in the extremities indicated a return to sensibility. She moved her head slowly from right to left, as if waking from a painful dream. Then she heaved a sigh, and reopened her eyes.

It was evident that life had returned before reason. For some seconds she looked about the room, with that vague expression belonging to one who neither knows where she is nor what has happened; but presently a light tremor ran through her body. Then she uttered a faint cry, and placed her hand over her eyes, as if to dispel some horrible illusion.

Memory had reawakened. The crisis was past.

Gilbert could not conceal from himself that the accident had some moral cause. He knew how little effect medicine has in such phenomenal cases, and he prepared to withdraw; but at his first backward step, as if by some interior sense she had guessed his intention, the Queen put out her hand and grasped his arm, and said, with a voice as nervous as the gesture which accompanied it, "Remain!"

Gilbert paused, much astonished. He was not ignorant of the Queen's want of sympathy with himself; albeit, on the other side, he had before remarked the strange and almost magnetic influence which he exercised over her.

"I am at the Queen's orders," he said; "but I think

it would be well to calm the anxiety of the King, and of the other friends who remain in the drawing-room, and if your Majesty will permit — "

"Thérèse," said the Queen, addressing Madame Lamballe, "go and tell the King that I am myself again; and then see that I am not interrupted, for I must talk with Doctor Gilbert."

The Princess obeyed, with that passive amiability which was the dominant trait in her character, and even in her physiognomy.

Leaning on her elbow the Queen followed the Princess with her eyes, and waited till there was time to fulfil her errand. Then, seeing how effectually that mission was accomplished, — thanks to the vigilance of the Princess, — the Queen felt at liberty to converse at her leisure with the Doctor; so she turned toward him, fixing her glance upon his face.

"Doctor," she demanded, "are you not astonished that accident constantly brings you face to face with me, in the physical and moral crises of my life?"

"Alas, Madame! I do not know whether I ought to be thankful or regretful over such accidents."

"Why so, Monsieur?"

"Because I read in the depths of your heart that it is neither to your desire nor your will that I owe this honorable contact."

"I said *accident!* You know that I am frank. Under the trying circumstances which have recently brought us together, you have shown genuine devotion. I do not forget it, and I thank you for it."

Gilbert bowed. The Queen noted the movement of his face, as well as of his body. "I also am a physiognomist," she said. "Do you know that you have answered me without speaking a word?"

"Madame, I should be in despair if my silence were less respectful than my speech."

"You were saying to yourself, that I had thanked you, because that was the regular thing for me to do, but that we had better change the subject."

"I at least showed my wish that her Majesty should put my devotion to the proof, and permit me to manifest it in some more efficacious manner than I have been able to do so far; and perhaps this sort of wistful impatience is what the Queen noticed in my countenance."

"Monsieur Gilbert," she said, looking steadfastly at the Doctor, "you are a superior man, and I wish to make the *amende honorable*. I was formerly prejudiced against you, but those prejudices exist no longer."

"Her Majesty will permit me to thank her from the bottom of my heart, not for the compliment wherewith she deigns to honor me, but for the assurance which she gives me."

"Doctor," replied the Queen, as if what she was about to say was the natural outgrowth of what she had said already, "what do you think of the illness which has just come to me?"

"Madame, I am an exact man, a scientific man. Have the goodness to put your question in a more precise form."

"I ask if you believe my swoon was caused by one of those nervous crises to which we poor women are subjected by the weakness of our organization, or do you suspect that the accident had a more serious cause?"

"I answer your Majesty, that the daughter of Maria Theresa, — that the woman whom I saw so calm and courageous on that terrible October night, — is no ordinary woman, and consequently not moved by one of those accidents which take hold of ordinary women."

"You are quite right, Doctor. — Do you believe at all in presentiments?"

"Science rejects all phenomena which tend to reverse the material and natural order of things, and therefore it sets aside all such facts as give the lie to natural law."

"I should have said, Do you believe in predictions?"

"I believe the Supreme Goodness, for our best good, hides the future behind an impenetrable veil. Some minds, endowed by Nature with great scientific accuracy, may sometime be able, through a study of the past, to lift a corner of the veil, and see dimly, as through a mist, events to come; but these exceptions are rare; for since religion would abolish belief in fatality, and philosophy has set limits to faith, the prophets have lost three quarters of their art. Nevertheless — "

"Well, nevertheless —?" rejoined the Queen, seeing him lost in thought.

"Nevertheless, Madame," he continued, as if it required an effort to deal with questions which his reason relegated to the domain of skepticism, — "nevertheless, there is a man — "

"A man —?" repeated the Queen, who followed with interest his halting words.

"There is a man who has confounded, with incontestable facts, all the arguments of my intelligence."

"And that man is —?"

"I dare not name him to your Majesty."

"That man is your master, is he not, Monsieur Gilbert? This man, all-powerful, immortal, is the divine Cagliostro."

"Madame, my only master, my true master, is Nature. Cagliostro is only my benefactor. Pierced by a ball, which passed through my breast, — rapidly losing my blood, through a wound which, since I have become a

physician, and after twenty years of study, I still regard as incurable, — he healed me in a few days, thanks to a balm, of whose composition I am yet ignorant. Thence arises my gratitude, — I might almost say, admiration."

"And this man has made you predictions which have been accomplished?"

"Strangely and incredibly, Madame! Yes, that man marches forward in the present, with an assurance which compels you to believe in his knowledge of the future."

"So if that man had predicted something about yourself, you would believe his prophecy?"

"I should certainly act as if it might be fulfilled."

"So that if he had predicted for you a premature death, terrible and disgraceful, you would prepare yourself for that death?"

"After everything else, Madame, — after having tried to escape, by all accessible means."

"Escape? No, Doctor, no! I see plainly that I am condemned. This Revolution is a maelstrom which will engulf the throne. The populace is a lion which will devour me."

"Ah, Madame! The lion, which you dread, you can compel to lie down at your feet, like a lamb."

"Have you not seen the populace at Versailles?"

"Have *you* not seen the populace at the *Tuileries?* They make an ocean, Madame, which beats incessantly upon, and threatens to extirpate, the rock which opposes its course, yet caresses the ship which is intrusted to its keeping."

"Doctor, all was long ago at an end between the people and myself. They hate me, and I do not understand them."

"Because you do not know each other. Cease to be a Queen to the people, and become a mother. Forget that

you are the daughter of Maria Theresa, our old enemy. Forget that you are the sister of Joseph the Second, our false friend. Be a Frenchwoman, and you will hear the voices of the people uplifted to bless you, and you will see the arms of the people extended to caress you."

Marie Antoinette shrugged her shoulders. "Yes, I know them! They blessed yesterday. They caress to-day. To-morrow they will throttle those whom they have blessed and caressed."

"Because they feel that there is in such unfortunates some resistance to the popular will, that hatred is returned for love."

"Do they know what they love and what they hate? The populace becomes an element of destruction, like wind, water, and fire, yet with all the caprices of a woman."

"Because you only see the shore, Madame, as the visitor on the cliffs sees the ocean. Advancing and retreating, without any apparent motive, it breaks in foam at your feet, and enwraps you in moans which you mistake for roars. But this is not the way you ought to consider it. You should regard the ocean as moved by the spirit of the Lord who rules the great waters. You should see the ocean as God sees it, marching on in unity, yet breaking through whatever obstacle stands in its way. You are Queen of the French, not merely of France, Madame; yet you ignore what is taking place in France at this very hour. Raise your veil, Madame, instead of lowering it, and you will admire, instead of fear the people."

"What then shall I see, — so fine, so magnificent, so splendid?"

"You will see a new world born amidst the ruins of the old. You will see the cradle of France, floating like the bulrush ark of Moses, but on a stream much bigger

than the Nile, than the Mediterranean, or even the ocean. God protect thee, oh cradle, God guard thee, oh France!"

Though so little of an enthusiast, Gilbert lifted his eyes and arms towards Heaven. The Queen regarded him with surprise. She could not understand him.

"And whither will this cradle float?" she asked. "To the National Assembly, that convention of disputants, of destroyers, of levellers? Is old France to guide the new? Unhappy mother, for so beautiful a child!"

"No, Madame! but wherever that cradle may find a resting-place, one day or another, — to-day, perhaps to-morrow, — men will call that unknown land their Nation; and the babe will find a vigorous nurse, a nourisher of strong people, — Liberty!"

"Grand words, which abuse has killed, — Nation and Liberty."

"No, Madame, not only grand words, but grand ideas, grand facts. Look at France, at a moment when she is already bruised, when nothing is as yet reconstructed; when she has no regular municipalities, and hardly departments; when she has no laws, and everybody is a law unto himself. See her cross, with steadfast eye and assured step, the passage which leads from the old to the new, that narrow bridge across the abyss. See that bridge, — slender as that which Mohammed saw leading into Paradise, — which France traverses without swerving. Whither goeth that ancient France? Into the unity of a common country. All that was heretofore believed to be difficult, painful, insurmountable, has become not only possible, but easy. Our loosely bound union of provinces was but a sheaf of prejudices, a bundle of opposing interests, of individual notions. Nothing could prevail, it was believed, against the twenty-five or

thirty nationalities, which repelled the one general nationality. Would old Languedoc, old Toulouse, old Brittany, consent to make themselves part of Normandy, Burgundy, or Dauphiny? No, Madame; but all together they are willing to make France. Why were they so obstinate about their rights, their privileges, their independent legislation? Because they had no common country, no Nation. Now, as I have told you, Madame, National Unity has appeared to them. Somewhat far in the future, it may be, but still they have seen it, — the fruitful and immortal mother, calling to her arms her isolated and lost children. She who calls them is their common mother. In their humility they have called themselves Languedocians, Provençals, Bretons, Normans, Burgundians, Dauphinese; but they were mistaken, for they are all French, they are part of France."

"But according to you, Doctor," said the Queen, with a touch of irony, "France, this ancient France, — the eldest daughter of the Church, as the popes have called her since the Ninth Century, — never existed till yesterday."

"That is precisely wherein lies the miracle, Madame. There was *a France*, but now there are *the French;* and not only are they French, but they are brothers, brothers who grasp each other by the hand. My God, Madame, men are not so bad as your world may think. They tend towards sociability. All your unnatural inventions have failed to keep them entirely apart, — your interior custom-houses, your innumerable tollgates, your ferries on the rivers, your turnpikes on the highways, your diverse local laws, your differing regulations, weights, and measures, your provincial rivalries, in towns, cities, and hamlets. Some fine day a trembling of the earth will shake the throne, will overturn ancient walls, will destroy all obstacles. Men will then look at each other in

the face of Heaven, — basking in the peaceful and happy light of that sunshine which not only fertilizes the earth but the heart. Fraternity will hasten a holy harvest. Enemies, astonished at the hatred which has so long agitated them, will advance, not against one another, but towards one another, with open arms, not filled with weapons; and this will be done naturally, not officially, or by command. Under the flood-tide, rivers and mountains will disappear. Geography will be no more. The universal hymn, which thirty millions of French people chant, will be in these words:

Praise God who hath made us a Nation!

and there will be many accents, but one tongue."

"What are you coming to, Doctor? Do you hope to reassure me by a vision of such a general federation, of thirty millions of rebels against their King and Queen?"

"Ah Madame, undeceive yourself!" cried Gilbert. "It is not the people who rebel against King and Queen. It is King and Queen who are in rebellion against the people, — rulers who continue to talk about *privileges* and *royalty*, when all around them the people are talking of fraternity and duty. In your mind's eye glance at some popular feast, and you will almost always see an altar, in the middle of a vast plain, or on some hillock, — an altar pure as Abel's; and on that altar you will see a little child, which all the feasters have adopted. Dowered with the vows, the gifts, the tears of all, it becomes the child of all, — the child of a regiment of hearts. Madame, France — the France of yesterday, of which I speak — is the infant on the altar. Only around that altar are no longer grouped villages and cities, but peoples and nations. France is the Christ born in a manger, amidst the lowly, for the salvation of a world. Peoples shall

rejoice in this birth. Kings shall bend the knee and bring their tributes, like the three from the far East, who came to the stable in Bethlehem. Italy, Poland, Ireland, and Spain look to this infant, born yesterday, who yet prophesies their future. With tear-filled eyes they stretch forth their enchained hands, and exclaim: 'France, France, in thee are we free!' — Madame, Madame," continued Gilbert, appealingly, "it is not yet too late. Take this infant on the altar, and be you its mother!"

"Doctor, you forget that I have other children, the offspring of my life, and that in doing what you suggest, I should be disinheriting them for a stranger."

"If it be so, Madame," replied Gilbert, with deep sorrow, "wrap your children in the war-mantle of Maria Theresa, and take them outside of France; for you say truly, the people will devour you, and your babes with you. Only there is no time to be lost. Hasten, Madame, hasten!"

"And you do not oppose our departure, Monsieur?"

"Far from it! When I learn your real intentions, I will aid you, Madame."

"This falls out marvellously well," said the Queen, "for there is a gentleman already at work for us, devoted until death."

"Ah, Madame!" exclaimed Gilbert, with terror, "it cannot be the Marquis de Favras of whom you speak?"

"Who has told his name? Who has betrayed our project?"

"Oh Madame, be on your guard. A fatal prediction pursues him also."

"And by the same prophet?"

"Even so!"

"And according to that prophet, what fate awaits Favras?"

"A premature death, disgraceful and terrible, — like the one you spoke of just now!"

"You say well, there is no time to lose, if we would disappoint this prophet of evil."

"You mean to notify Favras that you accept his help?"

"At this very instant he is being notified, Monsieur Gilbert, and I await his reply."

Affrighted by the events in which he suddenly found himself embroiled, Gilbert passed his hand over his forehead, as if to gain some light. At that moment Madame Lamballe entered, and whispered two words in the Queen's ear.

"Let him come in! Let him come in!" cried the Queen. "The Doctor knows all. — Doctor, this is Vicomte Isidore de Charny, who brings me a response from the Marquis de Favras. By to-morrow the Queen will have quitted Paris. The day after, we shall be outside of France. Come, Monsieur de Charny, come. — Great God! — What is the matter? — Why are you so pale?"

"The Princess says I may speak before Doctor Gilbert — ?" said Isidore.

"And that is true! Yes, yes, — speak! You have seen Favras? He is ready? We accept his offer! We will leave Paris, leave France."

"The Marquis has been arrested within the hour, on the Rue Beaurepaire, and taken to the royal prison of the Châtelet."

The Queen's glance met Gilbert's. Hers was luminous, desperate, wrathful. All the strength of Marie Antoinette seemed concentrated in that look.

Gilbert approached her, and said, with an accent of profound pity: "Madame, if I can be of any service to you,

dispose of me. My intelligence, my devotion, my life, are at your feet."

The Queen raised her eyes slowly towards the Doctor and said calmly, in a resigned tone: "Monsieur Gilbert, you who are so wise, you who witnessed the experiment this morning, is it your opinion that death by this hideous machine will be as easy as its inventor claims?"

Gilbert sighed, and covered his eyes with his hand.

At that moment *Monsieur*, who knew all he wished to know, — for the news of the arrest of Favras had spread over the palace in a few seconds, — *Monsieur* ordered his carriage in all haste, and was going out without bothering himself to inquire about the Queen's health, and almost without taking leave of the King; but Louis Sixteenth barred his passage, saying: "My brother, you are not in such urgent haste to reach the Luxembourg that you have no time to give me a little counsel, I suppose? In your opinion, what ought I to do?"

"You ask what I would do, if I were in your place?"

"Yes!"

"I should abandon Favras, and swear fidelity to the Constitution."

"How could you swear fidelity to a Constitution not yet completed?"

"All the more reason, my brother," replied *Monsieur*, with that false and indirect look, which shared the serpentine ways of his heart, "all the more reason why you would not feel obliged afterwards to keep your oath."

The King remained an instant in thought. Then he said: "This will not interfere with my writing to Bouillé that our plan still holds good, but is postponed. This delay will give Charny time to go carefully over the route we ought to take."

CHAPTER XLIV.

PROVENCE DISAVOWS FAVRAS AND THE KING SWEARS TO SUPPORT THE CONSTITUTION.

THE day after the arrest of Favras, the following singular circular was scattered throughout Paris:

The Marquis de Favras, living in the Place Royale, was arrested, with Madame his wife, during the night of the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth, on account of a plot which had for its purpose the enlistment of thirty thousand men, to assassinate M. de Lafayette and the Mayor of the City, and also to deprive us of the means of subsistence.

Monsieur, the King's brother, was at the head of the affair.

Signed: BARAUZ.

One can understand the commotion which such a circular would create in the Paris of 1789 and 1790, so easily roused. A lighted train of powder could not have produced a more rapid flame than that set afoot by this incendiary paper. It was at once in everybody's hands; and two hours later, everybody knew it by heart.

On the evening of the twenty-sixth, the day after Christmas, the members of the Commune were assembled in council at the Hôtel de Ville, or City Hall, reading the report rendered by the Investigating Committee, when the usher unexpectedly announced that *Monsieur* requested admission.

"Monsieur!" repeated the worthy Bailly, who presided at the meeting, "which Monsieur?"

"*Monsieur*, the King's brother," replied the usher.

At these words the members looked at one another, for since yesterday the name of *Monsieur* had been in everybody's mouth; but they also arose respectfully in their places.

Bailly threw an inquiring glance around the circle, and as the mute responses, which he read in the eyes of his colleagues, seemed to him unanimous, he said: "Go tell *Monsieur* that we are ready to receive him, though very much astonished at the honor he does us."

A few seconds later *Monsieur* was introduced.

He was alone. His face was pale. His step, ordinarily not very steadfast, was to-night more vacillating than usual.

Happily for the Prince, the members of the Common Council sat around a large semicircular table, shaped like a horseshoe, and near each seat were lights, to aid the Councillors in their work; whereas the Prince stood facing them, from the enclosure of the horseshoe, which was left in comparative obscurity.

This circumstance did not escape *Monsieur's* notice, and tended to give him confidence. He looked timidly at the large assemblage, wherein he at least saw some respect, in default of sympathy, and spoke with a trembling voice, which grew stronger as he went on. This speech is reproduced from the historic records, without the alteration of a syllable.

"Gentlemen, the desire to repel a calumny has brought me into your midst. Monsieur de Favras was arrested night before last, by order of your Investigating Committee; and to-day the report is abroad that *I* am entangled with him."

Smiles lighted the faces of his auditors, and the first part of his address was received with chuckles.

He continued: "In my character as a citizen of Paris

I think it a duty to myself to inform you of the only relations which I have ever sustained towards Favras."

As one may easily imagine, the attention of the members of the Commune redoubled. They were glad to hear from *Monsieur's* own mouth, whether they believed him or not, what the relations were between Favras and his Royal Highness.

He continued in these terms: "In 1772 the Marquis de Favras enlisted in my Swiss Guards, which he left in 1775. Since that date I have not spoken with him."

A murmur of incredulity passed through the audience; but it was checked by a look from Bailly, and *Monsieur* was left in doubt whether it was a murmur of approbation or disapprobation.

He resumed: "Deprived, during several months, of the enjoyment of my revenues, and anxious about some heavy payments which I must make in January, I wished to be able to meet these agreements, without being indebted to the public treasury. I therefore resolved to obtain a loan. Favras had been hereabouts a fortnight or so, and he was pointed out, by Monsieur de la Châtre, as a man able to procure such a loan, from a certain Genoese banker. Consequently I signed an obligation for two millions, the amount necessary for meeting my engagements at the commencement of the year, and for supporting my regular establishment. This affair was purely financial, and I charged my steward to see to it. I have not seen Favras. I have not written him, or held any communication with him. What he has done in other matters is utterly beyond my knowledge."

A contemptuous laugh, which came from some of his audience, proved that everybody was not disposed to credit, even on his own word, the Prince's singular assertion, — that without seeing the agent, especially when

that agent was one of his old officers, Provence had intrusted to him negotiations for two millions of francs.

Monsieur blushed. Anxious to get out of the false position in which he found himself, he hastily continued: "Well, I learned yesterday, gentlemen, that there was being profusely distributed, throughout the capital, a paper which reads thus."

Thereupon he read the bulletin just now cited, — a very useless proceeding, as everybody had the circular, either in his hand or his head.

At the last words, "*Monsieur*, the King's brother, was at the head of the affair," all the members of the Commune bowed. Did the members mean that they were of the same mind as the circular; or did they simply mean that they were not ignorant of the accusation?

Monsieur persevered: "You would hardly expect me, I suppose, to so far forget my rank as to condescend to justify myself from such a charge; but at a time when the most absurd calumny may easily lead you to confound your best citizens with enemies of the Revolution, I have concluded, gentlemen, that it is due to the King, to you, and to myself, to enter into all the details to which you have listened, in order that public opinion may not remain unsettled. Since the day when, in the Second Assembly of the Notables, I declared myself as to the fundamental question, which as yet divided many minds, I have not ceased to believe the times ripe for a grand Revolution; whereof the King, by reason of his motives, his virtues, and his supreme rank, ought to be the chief, for the Revolution could not be advantageous to the nation, without being equally so to the monarch, — to the end that the royal authority should be the safeguard of national liberty, as national liberty is the basis of royal authority."

Although the sense of this phrase was not very clear, the habit of applauding certain combinations of words led the hearers to applaud these.

Thereby encouraged, *Monsieur* raised his voice, and added, addressing the assemblage with more assurance: "Who can cite one action or speech of mine, which contradicts the principles I have just uttered? Who can show, under any circumstances in which I have been placed, that I have ceased to make the welfare of the King and of the people the sole object of my thoughts and vows? Till then, I have the right to be believed. I have never changed my sentiments or my principles, and I never shall change them."

Novelist though the writer may be, he has encroached upon history, by giving this spun-out speech of his Royal Highness in its full extent. It is well that even novel-readers should know what was the condition of a Prince at the age of thirty-five, who, at sixty, wished to grant us the charter, graced with its Article Fourteen.

As we wish to be no more unjust to Bailly than to his Royal Highness, we quote the response of the Mayor of Paris, as we have quoted *Monsieur's* speech.

Bailly said: "It is a great satisfaction for the representatives of the Parisian Commune, to see among them the brother of their cherished King, a King who is the restorer of French liberty. August brothers, they are united by the same sentiments! *Monsieur* has shown himself the first citizen of the kingdom, by voting, in the Second Assembly of Notables, for the admission of the Third Estate to equal legislative rights. He was then almost alone in his opinion, supported by a very small number of the friends of the people; but he adds the dignity of reason to all his other titles to national respect. *Monsieur* is therefore the chief author

of the doctrine of civil equality. Of this he gives a new example to-day, by coming voluntarily to mingle with the representatives of the people, where he wishes to be appreciated only through his patriotic opinions. These opinions are involved in the explanation which *Monsieur* has given the meeting. The Prince confronts public opinion. As a citizen, he sets a value on the judgment of his fellow-citizens; and, in the name of this assemblage, I offer *Monsieur* the tribute of respect and gratitude due to such sentiments, to the honor of his visit, and above all to the value which he attaches to the opinions of free men."

As *Monsieur* well understood, despite the eulogy on his conduct pronounced by Bailly, that conduct might be differently regarded by others. He however responded, with that paternal air which he so well knew how to assume, in situations where it might be useful: "The duty which I have discharged is painful to a virtuous heart; but I am well repaid by the sentiments which this assemblage has manifested towards me, and my mouth need only open once more, to demand pardon for those who have wronged me."

One can see that *Monsieur* pledged himself to nothing, nor did he ask anything definite of the assemblage. For whom did he crave pardon? Certainly not for Favras, because nobody really knew that Favras was culpable. Besides, Favras had not wronged *Monsieur*.

No! *Monsieur* only asked mercy for the anonymous author of the accusing circular; but this author, being unknown, had no need of municipal favor.

Historians so often pass over the crimes of princes without notice, that it is left for novelists to do the historian's office in such a case, at the risk of making a romance, as in this chapter, as tiresome as history. It

goes without saying, that when we talk of blind historians and stupid histories, we take it for granted that everybody will know to what historians and histories we allude.

Monsieur had now put into practice, on his own behalf, the advice which he gave his brother Louis. He had renounced Favras; and, as may be seen by the eulogium bestowed by the worthy Bailly, this move proved a complete success.

It was doubtless in consideration of this that Louis Sixteenth decided, on his part, to swear fidelity to the Constitution.

As the usher of the Commune had announced to the Mayor the advent of *Monsieur*, so, on one fine morning, another usher announced to the President of the National Assembly, who that day happened to be Bureaux de Puzy, that the King, with three or four officers and two cabinet ministers, was in waiting at the door of the Riding School (which had at last been put into proper trim for the legislative sessions), as *Monsieur* had not long before knocked at the door of the Hôtel de Ville.

The representatives of the people looked up in amazement. What could the King have to say, who had so long kept away from them?

Louis the Sixteenth was invited to enter, and the President ceded to him the chair.

The hall resounded with acclamations. Apart from such men as Pétion, Camille Desmoulins, and Marat, all France was at that time Royalistic, or believed itself so.

The King had been moved to come and felicitate the Assembly on its efforts. He wished to praise the admirable division of France into geographical departments;

but above all, what he could no longer delay expressing, — what filled him to repletion, — was his ardent love for the Constitution.

The beginning of his speech (let us not forget that nobody — White or Black, Royalist or Constitutionalist, Aristocrat or Patriot — knew what the King was driving at!) caused some uneasiness; the middle of it disposed the general mind to gratitude; but the termination — oh, that termination! — roused the Assembly to enthusiasm.

The King could not resist his desire to express his love for the Little Constitution of 1791, which was not yet born. What would he think of it when completely unveiled to the light of day? There could be no greater love than the King would cherish for it.

All this was sheer fanaticism!

We do not quote the King's entire discourse. Pest! It was six pages long. It is quite enough to have given entire *Monsieur's* discourse, which was only one page, and which yet seemed terribly tedious.

However, the King's speech did not seem prolix to the Assembly, which melted into tears as it listened.

When we say the members wept, this is no metaphor. Barnave wept. Lameth wept. Duport wept. Mirabeau wept. Barrère wept. There was a veritable deluge; but where was the Ark?

The Assembly lost its head. The members arose in a body. The tribunes arose. Every man extended his hand, and took an oath of fidelity to the Constitution, — the Constitution which did not yet exist.

The King went out; but the King and the Assembly could not separate like that. The members marched out behind him. They gathered about him, and formed themselves into an escort.

When they reached the Tuileries, the Queen welcomed them.

The Queen! She was no enthusiast, — she, the severely candid daughter of Maria Theresa! She did not weep, the dignified sister of Leopold; but she presented her little son to the Deputies of the Nation and said: "Gentlemen, I share the King's sentiments. I, also, cherish in my heart the affectionate demonstration inspired by his tender regard for the people. — Here is my son! I shall forget nothing which will teach him, at the proper time, to imitate the virtues of the best of fathers, to respect public liberty, and to maintain the laws, which I hope he will be the foremost to sustain."

It was necessary that the unfeigned enthusiasm for such a discourse should not cool. That of the Assembly was already at white heat. It was proposed, on the instant, to take an oath of Constitutional allegiance, which was formulated on the spot. First of all the President repeated the words: "I swear to be faithful to the nation, to the laws, to the King; and to maintain, with all my might, the Constitution decreed by the National Assembly, and accepted by the King."

All the Deputies except one raised their hands, each in his turn, and repeated, "I swear it!"

The ten days following this auspicious event — which brought joy to the Assembly, tranquillity to Paris, and peace to France — was spent in feasts, balls, and illuminations. One could hear nothing but Constitutional oaths taken on all sides. People swore everywhere, — on the Place de Grève, at the Hôtel de Ville, in the churches, on the streets, in the public squares. The altars were dressed in patriotic colors. Schools were taken thither, and scholars took the oath, as if they were already men, and knew the value of an oath.

The Deputies commanded a *Te Deum* to be sung, and were present in a body. There at the altar, in the face of God, the oath was again solemnly taken.

Only the King did not go to Notre Dame, and consequently did not take this sacred oath.

His absence was remarked; but everybody was so happy, so confident, so hopeful, that everybody was content with the first excuse that anybody offered for his absence.

"Why were you not at the *Te Deum?* Why did you not swear on the altar of your fathers?" asked the Queen.

"Because, though I am willing to *lie*, Madame, I will not *perjure* myself."

The Queen breathed more freely. Until then, like all the world, she had believed in the good faith of the King.

CHAPTER XLV.

A GENTLEMAN.

THE King's visit to the Assembly took place on February 4, 1790. Twelve days later, on the night of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth of the same month, during the absence of the Governor of the Châtelet, — who had asked and obtained permission, that very day, to go to Soissons, so as to be with his dying mother, — a man presented himself at the door of the prison, bearing an order, signed by the Lieutenant of Police, — an order which authorized the visitor to confer with Monsieur de Favras, without witnesses.

Whether this order was genuine or counterfeit, we dare not say; but at any rate, the sub-director — who was roused from sleep to inspect it — pronounced it good; and notwithstanding the hour was far advanced into the night, he gave permission for the bearer of the order to be introduced into the cell of Favras.

After assuring himself of the faithfulness of the turnkeys inside and the sentinels outside the prison, the sub-director returned to his bed, in order to finish the night so disagreeably interrupted.

The visitor — under pretence of having dropped an important paper, when he drew his order from his pocket-book — took the lamp, and searched all over the floor for it, until the sub-director had regained his chamber.

Then the visitor declared that he must have left this paper on his nightstand at home; but if anybody found

it, he begged it might be returned to him when he went away.

Then, returning the light to the turnkey in waiting, he asked to be conducted to the dungeon where Favras was confined. The jailer opened a door, let the Unknown enter, passed through after him, closed the door, and locked it behind them. He then looked at the Unknown curiously, as if he expected, at any moment, that he might receive from him some important communication.

They descended a dozen steps, and entered a subterranean corridor. There a second door presented itself, which the jailer opened and shut like the first.

The Unknown and his guide now found themselves on a sort of landing-place, having before them another flight of stairs, leading downward. The Unknown here paused, and looked searchingly into the shadows of the dark corridor. When he was sure that the obscurity was as solitary as it was silent, he asked: "You are the turnkey Louis?"

"Yes," responded the jailer.

"A brother from the American Lodge?"

"Yes."

"You were placed here a week ago, by some mysterious agency, in order to accomplish an unknown purpose?"

"Yes."

"Are you ready to do that work?"

"I am ready."

"You are to receive orders from a certain man—?"

"Yes, from the Anointed One."

"How were you to recognize him?"

"By three letters embroidered on his breastplate."

"I am that man, and here are the three letters." At these words the visitor threw back his lace collar; and on his breast he displayed the three embroidered letters,

L. P. D., the influence whereof we have had occasion to note more than once in the course of these narratives.

"Master, I am at your orders," said the jailer, bowing.

"Very well! Open the cell of Favras, and hold yourself in readiness to obey orders."

The jailer bowed without answering, walked on before to light the way, and whispered, as they stopped before a low door, "Here it is."

The Unknown made a sign with his head. The key, introduced into the lock, twice grated, and the door opened.

Although taking the most rigorous measures for the security of the prisoner, even assigning him a cell twenty feet underground, the authorities had him treated with the attention due to his rank. He had a regular bed with white curtains. Near the bed was a table, covered with books, ink, quills, and paper, intended for use in the preparation of his defence. Above them all towered an extinguished lamp. In a corner, on a second table, glittered several toilet utensils, taken from an elegant dressing-case, which bore the Marquis's coat of arms. Against the wall was a small glass, belonging to the same dressing-case.

The prisoner slept soundly. Although the door opened, and the Unknown approached the bedside, — although the jailer placed the second lamp near the first, and then went out again, at a sign from the visitor, — yet neither the noise nor the motion disturbed the prisoner's slumber.

The Unknown for a moment gazed with deep melancholy upon the sleeping man. Then, as if remembering that time was precious, whatever his regret at troubling such sweet repose, he laid his hand on the sleeper's shoulder.

The prisoner started and turned quickly, with eyes

wide open, as is the habit of those who fall asleep in the expectation of being roused by some painful intelligence.

"Be calm, Monsieur," said the Unknown, "it is a friend."

Favras looked at his nocturnal visitor with some suspicion, mingled with astonishment that a friend should be searching for him after midnight, eighteen or twenty feet below the ground. Then, suddenly recalling his thoughts, he said: "Ah! the Baron Zannone?—"

"Myself, dear Marquis!"

Favras glanced smilingly about, and pointed the Baron to a stool, free from both books and clothes. "Be kind enough to sit down!" he said.

"My dear Marquis, I come to propose to you something which does not admit of long discussion. Besides, we have no time to lose."

"What do you propose, Baron? I hope it is not another loan."

"Why so?"

"Because the guaranties which I could give you appear not to be altogether safe—"

"That would not matter with me, Marquis. On the contrary, I am quite ready to offer you a million."

"Me?" laughed Favras.

"Yes, you; but unless you accept certain conditions, I cannot make you this offer."

"Then, as you have already warned me that you are in haste, my dear Baron, come to business at once."

"You know that to-morrow you are to be tried?"

"Yes, I have heard something of the sort," responded the Marquis.

"You know that the judges, before whom you are to appear, are the same who acquitted Augeard and Besenval?"

"Yes."

"You know that neither of them would have been acquitted, but for the all-powerful intervention of the Crown?"

"Yes," responded Favras for the third time, but without showing the least change in his voice.

"You hope, undoubtedly, that the Court will do for you what it did for your predecessors?"

"Those with whom I have had the honor to be connected, in the enterprise which I headed, know what ought to be done in my behalf, Monsieur; and whatever they do will be well done."

"They have already taken their stand in regard to you, Marquis, and I am able to tell you exactly what they have done."

Favras evinced no desire to be thus informed.

Nevertheless the visitor continued: "*Monsieur* went to the Hôtel de Ville, and declared that he hardly knew you; that in 1772 you enlisted in his Swiss Guards; that in 1775 you withdrew from that regiment; and that he had not seen you since that time."

Favras bowed, in token of acquiescence.

"As to the King, not only had he no thought of flight (as he says), but more than that, — on the fourth day of the current month, he went to the National Assembly, and swore his adherence to the Constitution."

A smile passed over the Marquis's lips.

"You doubt me?" asked the Baron.

"I do not say so."

"Thus you see, you cannot rely upon *Monsieur*, you cannot rely upon the King."

"What then, Baron?"

"You will come before your judges —"

"You do me the honor to tell me so."

"You will be condemned — "

"It is probable ! "

"To death ! "

"That is possible ! " and Favras bowed his head, as if ready to receive the blow that should come to him, whatever it might be.

"But," urged the Baron, "do you know by *what* death, my dear Marquis ? "

"Are there two deaths, my dear Baron ? "

"Oh, there are six. There is impalement, quartering, the wheel, pressure, the gallows, decapitation ; or, rather, a week ago there were all these methods of death. To-day, as you say, there is only one, — the gibbet."

"The gibbet ? "

"Yes. The National Assembly, after having declared all men equal before the law, has now proclaimed equality in death. Nobles and commons are to go out of the world by the same door, — they will be hanged ! "

"Ah — ah ! " said Favras.

"Condemned to death, you will hang, — a sorrowful ending, even for one who does not fear death, — I am sure of that, — but shrinks from the gallows."

"So, Monsieur ! Have you come hither solely to tell me all this good news, or have you something still better in store ? "

"I have come to tell you that all is ready for your escape, — to say that in ten minutes, if you wish, you may be outside your prison, and in twenty-four hours, outside of France."

Favras reflected an instant, — not, however, that the Baron's offer appeared to cause him any emotion. Then he said : "Does this offer come from the King or his Royal Highness ? "

"No, it comes from myself."

Favras looked at the Baron. "From you? And why from you?"

"Because of my interest in you, Marquis."

"What interest can you take in me, having only met me twice before?"

"No need to see a man twice in order to know him. True gentlemen are rare, and I wish to save *one*, — I do not say to France, merely, but to humanity."

"You have no other reason?"

"This, Monsieur, that having negotiated with you this loan of two millions, — and you having disbursed the money, — I really furnished you the means of going forward in the plot now unearthed; and consequently I contributed involuntarily to your death."

Favras smiled. "If you have committed no other crime, sleep in peace, for I absolve you."

"How?" cried the Baron, "you refuse to flee?"

Favras extended his hand. "I thank you from the depths of my heart; I thank you, in the name of my wife and my children; but I refuse."

"Perhaps you think our plans badly laid, and fear lest an attempted escape should aggravate your case?"

"I believe, Monsieur, that you are a prudent man, and — I may add — adventurous, when you come in person to propose this escape; but I repeat to you, I will not flee."

"Perhaps you fear, being compelled to quit France, that you will leave your wife and children in misery? I have provided against this, Monsieur, and can offer you this wallet, in which are a hundred thousand francs in banknotes."

Favras looked at the Baron with a species of admiration. Then he said, with singular serenity, and shaking his head: "This astonishes you, Monsieur, and you ask

yourself, without daring to ask me, whence arises this strange resolution to go to the end, and die, if need be, whatever the manner of death."

"I own it!"

"Well, I will tell you. I am a Royalist, but not after the manner of those who emigrate to foreign lands, or play the hypocrite in Paris. My opinion is not based on calculation or interest. It is a worship, a creed, a religion. I must look on kings as I look on an archbishop or a pope, — as the visible representatives of that religion whereof I have spoken. If I flee, it may be thought that the King or *Monsieur* made me do so, and is therefore my accomplice; and *Monsieur*, who has denied me at the tribune, and the King, who feigns not to know me, would be destroyed by a blow which strikes in the dark. Religions fail, when there are no more martyrs. Well, I will revive *my* religion, by dying for it. This will be a reproach to the past, an encouragement to the future."

"But think of the manner of the death which awaits you!"

"The more infamous the death, the more meritorious the sacrifice. The Messiah died on a cross, between two thieves."

"I should understand you, Marquis," said the Baron, "if your death would do for Royalism, what Christ's death did for the world; but such are the sins of kings, that I fear they will not only require the cleansing blood of a gentleman, a nobleman, but that even a king's blood will not suffice for their justification."

"That will be as it pleases God, Monsieur; but in this age of irresolution and doubt, when so many fail in their duty, I can die with the consolation of having done mine."

"Oh no, Monsieur," said the Baron, with an air of

impatience, "you can die simply with regret at being uselessly sacrificed."

"When the disarmed soldier will not flee, when he awaits the enemy, when he braves death, when he meets it, he knows perfectly well that his death is useless; but he also knows that desertion would be shameful, and he prefers to die!"

"I cannot stay to argue," said the Baron, drawing out his watch, which pointed to three in the morning. "We have yet an hour. I will sit by the table, and read half an hour. Meanwhile, think it over. In half an hour you can give me a definite answer."

Taking a chair he seated himself before the table, with his back to the prisoner, opened a book, and began to read.

"Good-night, Monsieur!" said Favras, as he turned his face to the wall, doubtless to think without distraction.

The reader looked at his watch two or three times, more impatient than the prisoner. When the half-hour had rolled away, he arose and approached the bed; but he waited in vain, for Favras did not turn. Bending over him the Baron perceived, by his regular breathing, that the prisoner was really asleep.

"Well, I am defeated," he said to himself; "but judgment is not yet pronounced. Perhaps he still hopes!"

Not wishing to awake the unfortunate man, for whom a sleep so-long and so profound was in store, the Baron took a quill, and wrote, on a sheet of blank paper, the following note:

When the sentence is pronounced, when the Marquis de Favras is condemned to death, when he has no longer any hope, either from judges, from *Monsieur*, or from the King,— if he changes his mind, he has only to appeal to the turnkey

Louis, and say *I have decided to flee!* and means will be found to favor his flight.

Even when the Marquis is in the fatal death-cart, when he makes his public confession in front of Notre Dame Cathedral, when he crosses, with bare feet and corded hands, the short space which separates the vestibule of the Hôtel de Ville — where he will enter to make his dying will — from the gibbet erected in the Place de Grève, the Marquis has only to say, in a loud voice, *I wish to be saved!* and he shall be saved.

CAGLIOSTRO.

Then the visitor took the lamp and again approached the bed, to see if the prisoner had not awakened. Finding him still asleep, he went — though not without returning several times — to the door of the cell, behind which the turnkey Louis stood, upright and immovable, with that placid resignation which belongs to those adepts who are ready for all sacrifices, in order to attain the accomplishment of any grand work which they have undertaken.

"Well, master," he asked, "what am I to do?"

"Remain in the prison, and do whatever Monsieur de Favras commands."

The turnkey bowed, took the lamp from Cagliostro's hands, and walked respectfully before him, like a lackey who lights his master's way.

CHAPTER XLVI.

IN WHICH CAGLIOSTRO'S PREDICTION IS FULFILLED.

THE same day, an hour after noon, a clerk of the Châtelet Court descended, with four armed men, into the dungeon of Favras, and summoned him to appear before his judges.

During the night Favras had been warned of this by Cagliostro; and at about nine o'clock in the forenoon, the sub-director of the prison had notified him of the same likelihood.

The general proceedings had begun at half-past nine, and as late as three o'clock in the afternoon the trial still continued.

Ever since nine the hall had been filled with gossips, who packed themselves in, to see the man against whom sentence was to be pronounced. We use these last words advisedly, because no one doubted the condemnation of the accused.

In political conspiracies there are some unfortunates whose sacrifice is a foregone conclusion. It is felt that there must be expiatory victims; and these are fated to be those victims.

Forty judges were seated in a raised circle at the upper end of the hall, the President under a canopy. Behind him was a painting of Jesus Crucified; while opposite, at the other end of the hall, was a portrait of the King.

A row of National Grenadiers surrounded the place of trial, both inside and outside. The door was guarded by four men.

At quarter-past three the judges gave orders for the accused to be brought in. A detachment of a dozen grenadiers — who, with guns at their sides, awaited this order, in the middle of the hall — at once marched out. All heads, even those of the judges, were turned towards the door at which Favras must enter.

At the end of ten minutes or so four grenadiers reappeared. Behind them walked the Marquis de Favras. The other eight grenadiers followed him.

The prisoner entered amidst one of those oppressive pauses, which two thousand people, crowded into the same apartment, are sure to make, when the man or the thing appears which is the object of general expectation.

His face was calm. His toilet had been made with great care. He wore a silk coat, broidered with bright gray, a white satin waistcoat, small-clothes of the same material as his coat, silk stockings, and buckled shoes; and at his buttonhole hung the cross of Saint Louis.

His hair was dressed with rare nicety, and powdered with white. As it is said by the Two Friends of Liberty, in their History of the Revolution, "not one hair displaced its neighbor."

During the short time which it took for Favras to traverse the interval from the door to the prisoner's dock, everybody's breath seemed suspended.

Several seconds intervened between the arrival of the

accused, and the first words addressed him by the President. At last he made the customary gesture for enforcing silence, — though in this case it was entirely needless, — and asked, with a voice full of emotion: "Who are you?"

"I am an accused prisoner," responded Favras, with great calmness.

"What is your name?"

"Thomas Mahi, Marquis de Favras."

"Whence come you?"

"From Blois."

"What is your business?"

"I am a colonel in the King's service."

"Where do you live?"

"Place Royale, 21."

"What is your age?"

"Forty-six years."

"Be seated."

The Marquis obeyed. Not till then, seemingly, did the crowd breathe again; and their respiration sounded like a blast, — a blast of vengeance.

The accused did not shrink when he looked about him, and saw all eyes burning with hate, and so many fists threateningly raised. There was a feeling that some victim must be provided for the populace, from whom Augeard and Besenval had been snatched, and who daily demanded, with great outcries, that the Prince of Lambesq should be hanged, at least in effigy.

Amidst these angry countenances and flaming glances, the accused recognized the calm figure and sympathetic eye of his nocturnal visitor, whom he saluted with an imperceptible gesture, and then continued his survey.

"Accused," said the President, "hold yourself ready to answer questions."

Favras bowed. "I am wholly at your orders, Monsieur President."

Then began a second examination, which the accused sustained as calmly as the first.

Next came the witnesses for the prosecution.

Though Favras refused to save his life by flight, he wished to defend it by argument, and fourteen witnesses had been summoned for the defence; but after the evidence for the prosecution was heard, the President unexpectedly said: "Gentlemen, the arguments are ended."

"Excuse me, Monsieur," said Favras, with his habitual courtesy, "you forget one thing. True, it is of no great importance, but you have forgotten to hear the fourteen witnesses summoned in my behalf."

"This Court has decided," said the President, "that no more witnesses shall be heard."

Something like a cloud passed over the face of the accused, and then lightning shot from his eyes.

"I believed myself on trial before the Châtelet Court of Paris," he said. "I was mistaken. It appears that I am judged by the Spanish Inquisition."

"Remove the accused," commanded the President.

Favras was reconducted to prison. His calmness, courtesy, and courage made a favorable impression on those spectators who came unprejudiced to the court-room; but it must be admitted that the number of such auditors was small. The exit of Favras was accompanied by cries, menaces, and howls.

"No mercy! No mercy!" shouted five or six voices on the way, and these clamors followed him the other side of the prison gates.

Then he said, as if talking to himself: "This comes of conspiring with princes!"

Immediately after the departure of the accused, the judges began their deliberations.

At his usual hour Favras went to bed. Towards one o'clock in the morning somebody came into the cell and roused him. It was the turnkey Louis, who made a pretext of bringing to the prisoner a bottle of bordeaux, which he had not asked for.

"Monsieur," he said, "the judges are at this moment pronouncing your sentence."

"My friend, if it is for this thou hast awakened me, better leave me sleeping."

"No, Marquis, I have awakened you to ask if you have nothing to say to the personage who visited you last night."

"Nothing!"

"Reflect, Monsieur. When judgment is finally pronounced, you will be more carefully guarded; and then, however powerful that personage may be, even his will may be fettered by impossibilities."

"Thanks, my friend; but I have nothing to ask of him, either now or later."

"Then I am sorry I awakened you; but you would have been roused within an hour."

"So in thy opinion," smilingly said Favras, "it is hardly worth my while to fall asleep again?"

"Wait, and judge for yourself."

Indeed, they could already hear a great noise in the upper stories, — doors opening and shutting, and the butt-ends of muskets striking the ground.

"Ah ha!" said Favras, "is all this turmoil for me?"

"They are coming to deliver your sentence to you in person, Monsieur."

"The Devil! Ask Monsieur the Registrar to give me time to get into my breeches."

The jailer went out, and pulled the door to behind him.

Favras drew on his silk hose, his buckled shoes, and his small-clothes, and had so far made his toilet, when the door reopened. He did not think it necessary to further dress himself, but remained as he was. Truly a handsome man, with his head thrown proudly back, his hair half disarranged, his lace shirt open on his breast!

At the moment when the Registrar entered, the Marquis pushed away his shirt-collar from his shoulders, and said to the new-comer: "You see, Monsieur, that I await you in fighting costume;" and he passed his hand over his uncovered neck, ready for the aristocratic sword or the plebeian rope. "Speak, Monsieur, I am all attention."

The Registrar read, or rather mumbled over, the judicial sentence.

The Marquis was condemned to death. He was to make public confession in front of Notre Dame, and then be hanged in Place de Grève.

Favras listened to this reading with the utmost calmness. He did not even frown at the word *hanged*, — a word harsh to a nobleman's ears. Only, after a moment of silence, he looked the Registrar square in the face, and said: "I pity you, for being compelled to condemn a man on such meagre proofs!"

The Registrar avoided an answer. "Monsieur, you know that now there remain to you only the consolations of religion?"

"You are mistaken, Monsieur; there remain to me the consolations of a conscience void of offence."

Upon this Favras saluted the Registrar, who withdrew, having no further duties in that department.

At the door he turned, however, and said to the condemned man: "Do you wish me to send you a confessor?"

"A confessor sent by those who assassinate me? No, Monsieur! I should suspect him. I am willing to deliver my body to you, but I reserve my salvation! I should be glad to see the Curate of Saint Paul's, however."

Two hours later the venerable ecclesiastic whom he had named was in the cell.

CHAPTER XLVII.

PLACE DE GRÈVE.

These two hours were well employed, for immediately after the Registrar had gone, two other men entered, with solemn faces, and dressed like executioners. Favras understood that they were the forerunners of death, the advance-guard of the hangman.

"Follow me!" said one of these men.

Favras bowed, in token of assent; but pointing to the rest of his clothes, which lay on a chair, he asked: "Will you not give me time to dress?"

"Take it!" said the same man who had spoken before.

Favras went to the table, whereon were scattered different articles from his dressing-case. With the aid of his little glass, which ornamented the wall, he buttoned the collar of his shirt, bestowed a graceful fold upon his frill, and gave the most aristocratic turn he could to the bow of his cravat. Then he slipped on his vest and coat.

"Ought I to take my hat, gentlemen?" he asked.

"It is useless," replied the same speaker.

Meanwhile the man who had been silent looked at Favras, in a way to attract his attention. It even seemed as if this man made him some incomprehensible sign with his eye, but so rapidly, that the Marquis was left in doubt. Besides, what could this man have to say to him? So the Marquis thought no more about it, but waved his hand to the jailer Louis, with an amicable gesture, and said: "All right, gentlemen! Go ahead! I'm with you."

An usher was in attendance outside the door. He walked first, then Favras; and after them came the two funereal messengers.

This sinister group directed their steps upwards towards the ground floor of the prison.

Between the two wickets a platoon of National Guardsmen were in waiting.

Feeling himself sustained by their presence, the usher then said: "Monsieur, as you are condemned, give me your Saint Louis Cross."

"I supposed I was condemned to death, not degradation," said Favras.

"That 's the order, Monsieur," responded the usher.

Favras detached his cross; but not wishing to deliver it to this legal officer, he placed it in the hands of the sergeant-major, who commanded the platoon of National Guards.

"That is just as well," said the usher, without insisting that the cross should be delivered to himself personally. "Now then, follow me!"

They went up some fifty stairs, and then stopped in front of an oaken door, heavily spiked with iron, — one of those doors which send a shiver through the veins of a condemned man, — one of those doors whereof there are two or three on the road to the sepulchre, behind which he conjectures that something terrible awaits him, though he does not know what.

This door opened. They did not give Favras time to enter, but pushed him inside. Then the door suddenly closed, as if under the impulsion of an iron arm.

Favras saw that he was in the torture-chamber. "Ah, gentlemen," he said, growing slightly pale, "when you take a man into such tight places, — the Devil, you ought to let him know beforehand!"

Hardly had he uttered these words when the two followers threw themselves upon him, tore off his coat and waistcoat, pulled away his cravat, so artistically arranged, and tied his hands behind his back. In fulfilling his part of this duty with his comrade, the same torturer who, as Favras fancied, had previously made a sign to him, whispered in his ear : "Will you be rescued? There is still time!"

This offer brought a smile to the Marquis's lips, for it reminded him of the greatness of his mission ; but he softly shook his head.

A sort of rack, called a wooden horse, was already prepared, on which they stretched the condemned man. The other torturer approached with his apron full of oaken wedges, and an iron mallet in his hand. Favras extended to this man his handsome leg, still graced by his red-heeled shoe and his silk stocking; but the usher lifted his hand and said : "That is enough! The Court excuses the condemned from the torture."

"Ah! It seems that the Court is afraid that I may speak out. None the less am I thankful. I shall march to the gallows on two good legs, and that 's something. Meanwhile, gentlemen, you know I am quite at your disposal."

"You are to spend an hour in this hall," replied the usher.

"If not very amusing, it is at least interesting," said Favras ; and he began to walk about the hall, examining, one after another, certain hideous implements, resembling colossal spiders and gigantic iron scorpions. He felt as if at any given moment, by command of a fatal voice, all these instruments might become animate, and bite cruelly.

There were patterns of torture, of all ages, — from the time of Philip Augustus to the reign of Louis Sixteenth.

There were the hooks, wherewith they lacerated Jews in the Thirteenth Century. There were the wheels, whereon they crushed Protestants in the Seventeenth.

Favras stopped before each trophy, and demanded the name of each implement. This coolness astonished even the torturers themselves, — fellows not easily astonished, as everybody knows; and one of them asked Favras: "With what object do you ask these questions?"

The prisoner regarded him with a jesting air, common with gentlemen. "Well, Monsieur, it is possible that I may encounter Satan on the journey I am about to take, and I should not be sorry to make a friend of him, by communicating what I know about machines for torturing the damned, machines *he* has never heard of."

The prisoner had just completed his examination, when five o'clock sounded from the bell on the Châtelet. Two hours had elapsed since he left his dungeon. They took him back again, and there he found the Curate of Saint Paul's, already waiting.

As may be seen, Favras had not wasted the two hours of delay; and if anything could favorably dispose a man towards death, it must be such a spectacle as he had contemplated.

On seeing him, the curate opened his arms. "My father," said Favras, "excuse me if I can only open to you my heart. These gentlemen have taken good care that I shall open nothing else to you;" and he showed his hands, bound tight behind him.

"Can you not release the arms of the condemned man, during the little time he is with me?" asked the kind old priest.

"It is not in my power," responded the usher.

"Father," said Favras, "ask them if they cannot fasten my hands in front, instead of behind. That will

be more convenient for the time when I have to hold the penitence candle, in order to read my sentence."

The two assistants looked inquiringly at the usher, who nodded, as much as to say, there would be nothing out of the way about that; and so the favor which the Marquis asked was granted. Then he was left alone with the priest.

What took place at this supreme interview, between the man of the world and the man of God, is known only to themselves. In the presence of the sanctities of religion, did Favras unseal his heart, which had remained firmly closed before the majesty of law? In the presence of the consolations offered by that unknown world he was about to enter, were his eyes, heretofore dry with irony, moistened with the tears pent-up in his heart, as he thought of the cherished objects he must leave alone in the world behind him?

These things were not even revealed to those who entered his dungeon about three hours after noon, and found him with a smiling mouth, dry cheeks, and a stout heart. They came to announce the hour of his death.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I ask your pardon, but you have kept me waiting."

As he was already without vest and coat, and as his hands were bound, they took off his shoes and hose, and put a white shirt over the rest of his attire; and on his breast they placed an inscription bearing these words:

CONSPIRATOR AGAINST THE STATE.

At the Châtelet gate a tumbrel was in waiting, surrounded by a numerous guard. In the wagon was a lighted torch.

Perceiving the condemned, the multitude clapped

their hands. The judgment had been noised abroad since six in the morning, and the crowd thought the hours very tedious which intervened between the sentence and its execution.

Some fellows ran about the streets claiming drink-money from the passers-by.

"Why do you demand drink-money?" they were asked.

"We wished to drink to the execution of the Marquis de Favras," responded these death-mendicants.

Favras mounted the wagon with a firm step. He sat down on the side where the torch was placed, rightly believing the torch was there with that intention.

The Curate of Saint Paul's followed, and sat at his left hand.

The executioner mounted last, and sat behind the prisoner.

This executioner was the same man, with the grave but mild face, whom we saw at the Bicêtre Prison, when the trial of Guillotin's new machine was made. We have seen him before, we see him now, we shall see him again, — the true hero of the epoch upon which we are entering.

After seating himself, the hangman passed a rope about the Marquis's neck, — the rope wherewith Favras was to be hanged; but the hangman retained the end in his own hand.

When the tumbrel began to move, there was a movement in the crowd. Favras naturally glanced towards the quarter where this movement took place. He saw some fellows pressing forward, so as to be in the front ranks, and have better places on the street.

Suddenly he started, in spite of himself; for in the first row — in the midst of five or six companions who

had forced their way through the crowd — he recognized, in the costume of a porter from the market-place, his nocturnal visitor, who had promised to watch over him up to the last moment.

The condemned man made him a sign with his head, but it was only a sign of recognition, with no other meaning.

The wagon continued on its way, till it stopped in front of Notre Dame. The central door was open, so as to allow a view, at the other end of the darkened church, of the high altar, aflame with lighted candles.

There was such a rush of curiosity-seekers, that the wagon had been compelled to pause now and then, and could only go on when the guards had cleared the way, which was repeatedly closed up again by a flood of bystanders, breaking through the frail dike opposed to them.

In front of the Cathedral, there was a struggle to make an empty place.

"It is necessary to get out here, Monsieur," said the executioner to the condemned man, "in order to make public confession."

Favras obeyed without a word.

The priest dismounted first, then the prisoner, then the hangman, still grasping his end of the rope.

The prisoner's arms were tied somewhat loosely at the wrists, so as to allow him the use of his hands.

In his right hand they placed the torch; in his left hand, the sentence. The condemned man advanced as far as the portico, and knelt. In the front ranks of those who surrounded him, he recognized the same market-porter and his companions, whom he had seen as he emerged from the Châtelet. This persistence seemed to touch him, but not a word of appeal escaped his lips.

A clerk from the Châtelet was in attendance. "Read, Monsieur!" he said, in a loud voice; adding, in a whisper: "Monsieur, if you wish to be rescued, you have only to say the word."

Without answering, Favras began to read. This he did in a firm voice, with nothing in its accent to betray the least perturbation.

When the reading was over he addressed the crowd around him, and said: "About to appear before my God, I pardon those men who, contrary to their own consciences, have accused me of criminal projects. I love my King, and to this sentiment I die faithful. This is an example which I leave behind me, and which I hope will be followed by many noble hearts. The populace demand my death, with a great outcry. They must have a victim. So be it! I am glad this fatality falls on me, rather than on some faint heart, whom the sight of an unmerited scaffold might lead to despair. — Now, unless there is something else for me to do here, let us continue our journey, gentlemen."

The procession passed on. It was not far from the porch of Notre Dame to the Place de Grève, and the tumbrel made good time on the road.

When they reached their destination Favras said: "Gentlemen, may I not enter the Hôtel de Ville awhile?"

"Have you any revelations to make, my son?" asked the priest, quickly.

"No, my father; but I wish to dictate my last will and testament; and I have heard it said that this last favor is never refused to the condemned man who asks for it."

Instead therefore of going straight to the gibbet, the wagon turned towards the Hôtel de Ville, on the other

side of the square. A great clamor was heard among the people.

"He 's going to make revelations! He 's going to make revelations!" they shouted on all sides.

At this cry an observer might have noticed that a young man, clad in black, — who stood upright on a horseblock, at the corner of the Quay Pelletier, — grew pale.

"Fear nothing, Count Louis!" said a satirical voice near him. "The condemned will not speak a word as to what took place in the Place Royale."

The young man in black turned quickly. These words had been spoken to him by a market-porter, whose face could not be seen, because, in the very act of speaking, he had pulled his large hat over his eyes.

Moreover, if the fine young man cherished any doubt about the matter, it was speedily dissipated.

At the top of the portico of the Hôtel de Ville, Favras made a sign that he wished to speak. On the instant all noises were hushed, as if a puff of east wind had passed by, and blown away all disturbance.

"Gentlemen," said Favras, "I hear it rumored about me that I am going into the Hôtel de Ville to make revelations. Not so! In case there is any man among you, — as is possible, — who has anything to fear from such revelations, he may rest easy; for I am only going to make my dying testament."

With firm step he passed under the sombre vault and ascended the stairway, which led to the chamber whither it was customary to conduct prisoners at such a time, and which was therefore called the Chamber of Revelations.

Three men in black were there on duty; and among the three Favras recognized the clerk who had spoken to him near the cathedral.

As the condemned man could not write with his hands tied, he began to dictate his will.

We have heard much of the testament of Louis Sixteenth, because much is said of kingly documents; but we have the testament of Favras before our eyes, and we must say this one thing to the dear public: *Read and compare!*

His will finished, Favras asked the privilege of reading it, in order to sign it. They untied his hands, and the papers were given him. He read them carefully, and corrected such mistakes in spelling as the clerk had made. At the bottom of each page he wrote, *Mahi de Favras.*

After that he held out his hands, that the bands might be again tightened, an operation accomplished by the hangman, who had not left his side for a single instant.

The dictation of this will had taken over two hours. The populace, who had been on hand ever since the forenoon, became very impatient. Many excellent fellows had come there with empty stomachs, intending to breakfast when the execution was over; but they were still fasting.

The crowd began to murmur; and it was such a threatening murmur as had been already heard in the same place, — on the days when De Launay was killed, when Foulon was hanged, when Berthier was torn asunder.

Moreover the public began to think that Favras had been allowed to escape by some back passage.

At this juncture it was even proposed to hang the municipal officers in Favras's stead, and to demolish the Hôtel de Ville.

Fortunately, about nine in the evening, the prisoner reappeared. Torches were furnished to the soldiers, who formed a hedge about the place. All the windows on the

square were lighted. The gibbet alone remained in mysterious and terrible obscurity.

The appearance of the condemned man was greeted with unanimous cries, and by a great commotion among the fifty thousand people who crowded the square.

Now they were sure, not only that he had not escaped, but that he *could* not escape.

Favras looked about him. Speaking to himself, with an ironical smile peculiar to him, he murmured: "Not a carriage? Ah, nobility is forgetful. They were more polite to Count Horn than to me."

"That was because Horn was an assassin, while as for thee, thou art a martyr," responded a voice.

Favras turned, and again saw the market-porter, whom he had noticed twice before on the way to the gallows.

"Adieu, Monsieur," said Favras to him, "I hope, if there is any need of it, you will testify in my behalf."

Then, with a steadfast walk, he came down the vestibule steps, and walked towards the scaffold.

As he placed his foot on the first rung of the ladder leading to the gallows, a voice cried: "Jump, Marquis!"

The prisoner replied with a voice sonorous and serious: "Citizens, I die innocent. Pray to God for me!"

At the fourth round he stopped again, and spoke in a voice as firm and clear as before: "Citizens, I ask the aid of your prayers. I die innocent!"

At the eighth step, the one from which he was to be launched into eternity, he repeated, for the third time: "Citizens, I die innocent. Pray to God for me!"

One of the two hangman's assistants, who mounted the stairs with him, said again: "You do not wish to be rescued?"

"Thanks, my friend, no! But God reward you for your good intentions."

Then bowing to the executioner, who seemed to wait for orders, instead of giving them, Favras said: "Do your duty!"

Hardly had he uttered these words than the hangman pushed him off, and the body swung into vacancy.

During the immense commotion produced in the Place de Grève, — while some amateurs clapped their hands, and cried *Encore!* as they might have done after a topical song in a vaudeville, or a grand aria in the opera, — the young man in black slipped away from the horseblock on which he was mounted, threaded his way through the crowd, and at the corner of the New Bridge sprang swiftly into a carriage, without livery or escutcheon, exclaiming to the coachman: "To the Luxembourg, at the top of your speed." The carriage started at a gallop.

Three men were awaiting the arrival of this carriage with much impatience.

These three men were *Monsieur* de Provence, and two of his gentlemen already named in the course of this narrative, but whom it is needless to name again at this point.

They waited with the greatest impatience, because they would have been at table two hours ago, but for their anxiety.

On his part the cook was in despair. This was the third dinner he had begun; and as it had been ready for ten minutes, it would be spoiled in another quarter-hour.

At this critical moment they heard a carriage roll into the courtyard.

Provence hurried to the window. In the darkness he could only see a shadow leap from the upper step of the carriage to the platform of the palace. So he left the window and ran towards the door; but before the future

King of France reached it, for his pace was always somewhat halting, the door opened, and admitted the young man in black, saying: "Monseigneur, all is over! Favras died without speaking a word."

"Then we can eat our dinner in peace, my dear Louis?"

"Yes, Monseigneur. — By my faith, he was a worthy gentleman, that man!"

"I am of your opinion, my dear fellow," said his Royal Highness. "At dessert, let us drink his health in a glass of Constance. — To dinner, gentlemen."

As he spoke, the two leaves of the door swung apart, and the illustrious comrades went into the dining-room.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE MONARCHY IS SAVED.

Several weeks after the execution which we have just described, — into the details whereof we entered, in order to forewarn our readers what gratitude may be expected from kings and princes, towards those who sacrifice themselves in behalf of such royal patrons, — a man, riding a dapple-gray horse, was climbing slowly up the Avenue de Saint Cloud.

This slowness must be attributed neither to the lassitude of the rider nor the fatigue of his horse. That neither the one nor the other had taken more than a short trip, it was easy to see ; for the foam which escaped from the horse's mouth was not the result of over-riding, but rather of hard restraint.

As to the horseman, one could see, at first sight, that he was a gentleman ; and his entire dress was not only free from dirt, but attested the precautions taken to preserve his garments from the mud which covered the road.

What retarded the horseman was the deep thought wherein he was evidently absorbed, and possibly his wish not to reach his appointment until a certain hour, which had not yet sounded.

He was a man about forty years old, whose powerful ugliness did not conceal his greatness of character. He had a head disproportionately large, bloated cheeks, a face seamed by the smallpox, an animated expression.

eyes with latent lightning, a mouth accustomed to deliberate irony and biting sarcasm. Such was the aspect of this man, destined, as one instinctively felt, to occupy a large place and make a great noise in the world.

His whole physiognomy, however, seemed covered with a veil, thrown over it by one of those organic maladies against which the most vigorous temperaments struggle in vain. His complexion was dull and gray. His eyes were weary and red. His jaws were overweighted with flesh, — the beginning of an unwholesome obesity.

Thus appeared the man whom we wish to place before the eyes of our readers.

Reaching the head of the avenue, he passed, without hesitation, through the gate opening into the courtyard of the palace, and measured the recesses of that courtyard with his eyes.

At the right, between two wings, which enclosed a sort of blind lane, a man was in waiting, who made a sign for the rider to come in that direction.

A gate was open. The attendant led the way beneath that gate. The horseman followed, and presently found himself in a second courtyard.

There the man on foot — who, by the way, wore coat, breeches, and waistcoat of black — stopped. Looking about him, and seeing that the place was quite deserted, he approached the horseman, hat in hand; and the cavalier, by leaning over his horse's neck, brought himself nearer to the man in black, and said in a low tone: "Monsieur Weber?"

"Monsieur de Mirabeau?" was the response.

"The same," said the rider, as he sprang to the ground, with more lightness than one would have believed possible.

"Enter," said Weber, quickly, "and be kind enough to wait an instant, till I can put your horse in the stable myself."

Meantime he opened the door of a parlor, whose windows and a second door looked out into the park.

Mirabeau entered this parlor, and employed the few minutes, during which Weber left him alone, in unbuckling his leathern overboots, which had excluded the dirt from his silken hose, and kept the gloss of his shoes untarnished.

As he had promised, Weber came back in five minutes, saying: "Come, Monsieur, the Queen is waiting for you."

"The Queen waiting?" replied Mirabeau. "Am I so unhappy as to have kept her waiting? I thought I was right on time."

"I only meant that the Queen was impatient to see you. Come, Monsieur!"

Weber opened the door leading into the garden, and entered the labyrinth of alleys which led to the most solitary and elevated portion of the park.

There, amid trees with outstretched and leafless arms, in an atmosphere gray and cheerless, appeared a pavilion, of the sort known as a *kiosk*.

The shutters of this pavilion were hermetically sealed, with the exception of two; and even these were pushed close together, and only allowed a brace of rays of light to enter, as through loopholes in tower-walls, — rays barely sufficient to render the darkness visible.

A huge fire burned in the fireplace, however, and two candelabras burned on the chimney-piece.

Weber made the gentleman he guided enter a sort of antechamber. Then, opening the door of the main room of the kiosk, after softly rapping, he announced the

Count Riquetti de Mirabeau, and drew back to let the visitor pass in front of him.

If he had been carefully listening, at the moment when the Count passed by, Weber would certainly have heard the statesman's heart beating against his great breast.

At this announcement a lady arose in the farthest corner of the room, and took several steps forward, with some hesitation, and even fear. This lady was the Queen.

Her heart also beat violently. Here, before her eyes, was this hated, decried, dangerous man; the man accused of bringing about the terrors of early October; the man towards whom royalty had turned for one instant, but who had been presently repulsed by political courtiers; the man who had since made them feel the necessity of conciliating him, by his two magnificent outbursts of wrath, which became almost sublime.

The first of these outbursts was his apostrophe to the Clergy.

The second was an address, in which he explained how the representatives of the people, from being merely the deputies of certain townships, had constituted themselves the National Assembly.

Mirabeau approached with graceful courtesy, which the Queen was surprised to note in a man whose energetic organization seemed to exclude such niceties.

Then he bowed respectfully, and waited.

The Queen was the first to break silence, with a voice in which she could not entirely suppress her emotion.

"Monsieur Mirabeau, Doctor Gilbert has assured us of your readiness to ally yourself with our party."

Mirabeau bowed, in token of assent.

The Queen resumed: "A former overture was made to you, to which you responded with a plan for a new cabinet."

Again Mirabeau bowed.

"It was not our fault, if this first plan failed."

"I so believe, Madame, especially on the part of your Majesty; but it was the fault of fellows who pretend to be devoted to the monarchy."

"What can you expect?" said the Queen. "This is one of the misfortunes of our position. Kings can no more choose their friends than they can choose their enemies; and sometimes they are compelled to accept the most disastrous sacrifices. We are surrounded by men who wish to save us, but who really ruin us. Their resolution to rule out of the King's cabinet all members of the Assembly, was a specimen of this blundering, directed against yourself. Do you wish me to cite a blunder which works against me? Can you believe that one of my most faithful friends, — a man who, I am sure, would readily die for us, — can you believe that this man, without giving us any hint in advance of his plan, brought to our dinner, — generally enjoyed under the public eye, as you know, — the widow and children of Monsieur de Favras, all three clad in deep mourning? My first thought was to rise and run to them, and to place these orphans of a man who so courageously died for us, — for I am not one of those who deny their friends, — to seat these children, I say, between the King and myself. All eyes were fixed on us, waiting to see what we would do. I turned. Do you know whom I saw behind me, not four steps from my armchair? Santerre, the man from the Faubourg Saint Antoine. I sank back into my chair, almost weeping with anger, and not daring to look again on that widow and her orphans. The Royalists blame

me for not braving everything, in order to mark my interest in that unhappy family. The Revolutionists are furious, not believing that these visitors were brought there without my permission. Oh Monsieur," continued the Queen, shaking her head, "we must indeed perish, when attacked by men of genius, but defended by men — very estimable no doubt — who have no idea of our situation;" and the Queen sighed, as she pressed her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Madame," said Mirabeau, touched by her great misfortune, which was not unknown to him, — and which, either from the Queen's habitual policy, or through her womanly weakness, she allowed him to discern, by her tears and agony, — "Madame, when you talk of men who attack you, you do not include me, I trust? I professed monarchical principles, when I could see nothing but weakness in the Court, when I understood neither the heart nor mind of the imperial daughter of Maria Theresa. I fought for the rights of the throne, when I inspired only suspicion, and all my measures, poisoned by malignant misinterpretation, appeared like so many snares. I served the King, when I knew well that I could expect from him — just, but deceived as he was — neither benefit nor reward. What may I do now, Madame, when confidence restores my courage, and gratitude — for your Majesty's reception of me — makes my former principles a duty and delight?"

Mirabeau continued, in his turn shaking his head: "It is late, very late, — I know it, Madame. In asking me to save it, perhaps the monarchy only proposes to me, in reality, that I should die with itself! If I had reflected, perhaps I should have chosen, in accepting the favor of this interview, some other moment than this one, so soon after his Majesty had delivered over to the Chamber of

Deputies his famous Red Book, — thus most unfortunately betraying the honor of his friends."

"Oh Monsieur, can you believe the King guilty of such intentional treason? Are you ignorant how it happened? The Red Book, forced from the King, would never have been delivered to the committee, if they had not promised to guard it sacredly. Then they had it printed! This was an offence of the committee against the King, not the King's betrayal of his friends."

"Alas, Madame! you know what causes led the committee to this publication, — which I disapproved as a man of honor and which I disavowed as a Deputy. At the very time when the King was swearing his love for the Constitution, he had a permanent agency at Turin, amidst the mortal enemies of that Constitution. When he was talking of financial reforms, and apparently accepting those proposed by the Assembly, his stables, large and small, were established at Trèves, hired and equipped by himself, and maintained under the orders of the Prince de Lambesq, — the mortal enemy of the Parisians, whose hanging they daily demand, — at least, in effigy. Enormous pensions have been paid to Artois, to Condé, to all the Court fugitives, and this in spite of a decree passed two months ago, which suppressed these pensions. True, the King forgot to sanction this decree. Well, Madame, what would you have? For two months there had been an unsuccessful effort to find out what was done with sixty millions of francs. The King was urged, pleaded with, to say what had become of that money; but he refused to say. The committee therefore believed themselves released from their pledge, and they accordingly printed the Red Book. Why did the King give up a weapon which could be so cruelly turned against him?"

"Oh Monsieur," cried the Queen, "if you were admitted

to the honor of membership in the King's Council, you would not advise him to such disastrous weaknesses, by which, — oh yes, I must use the word, — by which he is not only ruined, but dishonored."

"If I was honored by a call to the Royal Council, Madame, I should be near him as the defender of monarchical power, regulated by laws, and as the apostle of liberty, guarantied by the monarchical power. This liberty, Madame, has had three enemies, — the Clergy, the Nobility, the Royal Parliaments. The Clerical Power does not belong to this age, and was killed off by the resolutions of Talleyrand. The Nobles are to be found in every age, and I fancy we cannot reckon without them, — because, without Nobility, there can be no monarchy; but they must be restrained, and this is possible, only through the coalition of the people with the royal authority. Now so long as Royal Parliaments continue to exist, or can be summoned at the King's will, the royal authority cannot coalesce in good faith with popular legislation; because these Royal Parliaments, in France, are not representative and popular, like the English Parliament or the American Congress, but are more like conventions of lords; and they keep alive, in the King and the Nobility, a fatal hope, — the desire to restore the ancient order of things. After the Clerical Power is annihilated, and the Royal Parliaments forever dissolved, the Executive Power of the Crown may revive, regenerate the royal authority, and reconcile it with liberty. There you have my political policy! If it is also the King's, let him adopt it. If not his, let him repudiate it."

The Queen was impressed with the irradiation which his vast intelligence shed over the past, present, and future.

"Monsieur, Monsieur," she said, "I do not know whether or not these are the King's political views; but this I know, if I have any weight, — they are *my* views. As for the means of reaching this desirable end, make me to know them. I will listen to you, not only with attention, but with avidity, — yes, if I may say so, with gratitude."

Mirabeau glanced rapidly at the Queen, as if to measure her heart with his eagle eye; and he saw that, if not already convinced, she was in a fair way to be so.

This triumph, over so superior a woman as Marie Antoinette, petted the vanity of Mirabeau in the sweetest fashion.

"Madame, we have lost Paris, or nearly so; but there remain to us multitudes of Royalists, scattered through the provinces, and of these we must make our bundle of sound sticks, our sheaf of good wheat. That is why it is my opinion the King should quit Paris, but not France, — that he should retire to Rouen, in the midst of his troops; that from there he should publish ordinances more popular than the decrees of the Assembly. Then there need be, could be, no civil war, because the King would be more Revolutionary than the Revolution itself."

"But this Revolution, whether it goes ahead of us or behind us, does it not terrify you?"

"Alas, Madame! I believe I know, better than anybody else, that the Revolution must have its part in the matter. It must have its cake, — the sop thrown to Cerberus. I have already said to the Queen, that any attempt to reconstruct, on its ancient basis, the monarchy which the Revolution has destroyed, involves an enterprise beyond human power. All France has concurred in this Revolution, from the King to the poorest of his subjects, — either intentionally and actively, or negatively. It is

scarcely the old monarchy which I pretend to defend, Madame; for I dream of modification and regeneration, so as to establish a form of government more or less like that which has led England to the height of glory and power. Gilbert has told me something about the King's meditation over the prison and scaffold of Charles the First. After such a terrible vision, will his Majesty not be better contented with a throne like that of the Third William or the First George?"

"Oh Monsieur," cried the Queen, — to whom a single word spoken by Mirabeau recalled, with its mortal shiver, the vision at the Château Taverney, — the outline of the death-instrument invented by Guillotin, — "Oh Monsieur, restore to us such a liberal monarchy, and you will see if we are such ingrates as we are often represented to be."

"Well, Madame, this is what I will do," said Mirabeau, in his turn. "If the King sustains me, and the Queen encourages me, here at your feet I lay my oath as a nobleman, that I will accomplish the promise I now make to your Majesty, or die in the attempt, with all my armor on."

"Count, Count, do not forget, — it is more than a woman who hears your oath. You are heard by a dynasty of five centuries, — seventy kings of France, from Pharamond down to Louis Fifteenth, sleeping in their tombs, — which will be dethroned with us, if our throne should crumble."

"I know the obligations I incur. The task is immense. I know it! But it is not grander than my will, or stronger than my devotion. If sure of the sympathy of my Queen and the confidence of my King, I could undertake any work."

"If such promises only are needed, I can pledge

both!" and as she spoke, she saluted Mirabeau, with that siren smile which won all hearts.

He understood that his audience was over. The pride of the politician was satisfied, but his vanity as a gallant required something more; so he said, with bold but respectful courtesy: "Madame, when your imperial mother, Maria Theresa, admitted a subject to the honor of her presence, she never dismissed him without offering her hand for his kiss."

As he stood there, upright and expectant, the Queen looked upon him as a chained lion, who asked nothing better than to crouch at her feet.

With a smile of victory on her lips she extended her hand slowly, — that beautiful hand, cold as alabaster, and almost as transparent.

Mirabeau bowed, pressed his lips on that hand, and lifted his head proudly, saying: "Madame, through this kiss the monarchy is saved."

He went out, much moved, but joyous, himself believing — poor man of genius! — in the fulfilment of the prophecy he had made.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE RETURN TO THE FARM.

While Marie Antoinette is opening her aching heart to fresh hopes, and for a time forgetting her sufferings as a woman, in her anxiety for her safety as a queen, — while Mirabeau, like Alcidamas, the classic athlete, dreams of sustaining, single-handed, the dome of the falling monarchy, which threatens to crush him in its ruins, — we will take the reader, weary of so much politics, back among more humble people, and into an atmosphere less tainted.

We have seen with what fears Billot's heart was inspired by Pitou, the Lafayette of Haramont Village, when the latter made his second journey to the capital, — fears which recalled the farmer to his farm, — or, rather, the father to his daughter's side; and these fears were not exaggerated.

This return took place on the second day after the famous night on which occurred three important events: the flight of Sebastien Gilbert from his school to Paris; the hasty and unexpected departure of Isidore de Charny for Turin, following his equally sudden arrival in Paris; and Catherine's swoon on the highway from Villers Cotterets to Pisseleu.

In another chapter of this book we have related how Pitou, after having carried Catherine home to the farm, after having learned from her, in the midst of tears and moans, that the accident which had prostrated her arose

from the departure of Isidore, — we have related how, after all this, Pitou, overcome by her avowal, returned at once to his own home; where he found Sebastien's letter, which led him to hurriedly follow the boy to Paris; where we saw him awaiting the return of Doctor Gilbert, with so much anxiety that he did not at first think of speaking to Billot about affairs at the farm.

It was only when reassured as to Sebastien's fate, by seeing him come to the Rue Saint Honoré with his father, only when he learned, from the lad's own mouth, the details of his journey, — his meeting with Isidore, who had brought him to the city on the crupper of his horse, — it was only then that Pitou remembered Catherine, the farm, and Mother Billot, and spoke to Father Billot of the bad harvest, the continual rains, and Catherine's swoon.

As we have said, this swoon was what particularly disturbed Billot, and decided him to ask his dismissal of Gilbert, which was at once granted.

All the way along, Billot catechized Pitou about this fainting-fit. He loved his farm, this worthy farmer; he loved his wife well, this excellent husband; but above all else he loved his daughter Catherine; although, thanks to his unvarying ideas of honor and his invincible probity, this love, even if there had been any occasion, would have found him as inflexible a judge as he was a tender father.

When Billot questioned, Pitou answered. He had found Catherine lying across the road, so mute, motionless, and lifeless, that at first he believed her dead. In despair he lifted her in his arms, and placed her across his knees. Then, perceiving that she yet breathed, he ran with her towards the farmhouse, where, aided by Mother Billot, he put her to bed.

There, while Mother Billot was lamenting, he brutally

(as he said) threw water into her face. The cool shock made Catherine open her eyes. Seeing this, Pitou, as he told Billot, felt that his presence at the farm was no longer necessary, and went away to his own lodgings in Haramont.

The rest of Pitou's recital, — that is, what related to Sebastien, — Father Billot only heard once, and that sufficed; but thinking unceasingly of Catherine, Billot exhausted himself with conjectures about her accident, and its possible causes.

These conjectures crystallized themselves into questions addressed to Pitou, questions which Pitou answered diplomatically: "I don't know!"

There was the more merit in this answer, "I don't know," because Catherine had been cruelly frank in telling him everything, and consequently Pitou *did* know.

He knew that her heart was bruised by Isidore's farewell, and that this was why she fainted where Pitou found her; but this is what he would not have told the farmer, for all the gold in the world.

On the contrary, he was seized with the greatest pity for Catherine.

Pitou loved Catherine, — more, he admired her. We saw, at the proper time and place, how this love and admiration, though so little appreciated and so badly recompensed, brought both suffering to Pitou's heart and transports to his imagination; but however sharp his grief, — however exalted these transports, — causing Pitou such gastric disturbances that sometimes he could not dine or breakfast for an hour or two after his usual time, — these transports and sorrows had never brought him to such a point of weakness as to make him swoon.

Pitou put his feelings into the form of a syllogism, which he divided into three parts, with his accustomed

logic: "If Mademoiselle Catherine loves Isidore so much as to swoon when he goes away, then she loves Isidore more than I love Mademoiselle Catherine; for I never swooned in parting from her."

From this first premise he proceeded to the second: "If she loves him more than I love her, she must suffer more than I; in which case she suffers very much."

Thence he passed to the third part of his syllogism, — the conclusion, — a conclusion the more logical, because, like every right conclusion, it grew naturally out of its premises: "She suffers more than I, since she fainted, while I never swooned in my life."

These feelings rendered Pitou mute, in Billot's presence, as to Catherine's exact condition, a silence which augmented Billot's anxiety.

Billot's worriments became sharper as he drew nearer home, and they sought relief in the blows of the whip which the worthy farmer applied without stint, sometimes with one arm and sometimes with the other, to the flanks of the horse he hired from the stable in Dammartin. So effectual were his efforts, that by four in the afternoon the tilt-cart, with its two travellers, stopped at the door of the farmhouse, where their presence was greeted by the barking of the dogs.

Hardly had the cart come to a standstill in the courtyard, when Billot leaped to the ground and ran into the house; but an obstacle, which he did not expect, met him on the threshold of the girl's bedroom, which opened from the kitchen, on the ground floor.

This was Doctor Raynal, — a man we have already had occasion to see in these narratives, — who declared, that in Catherine's present state, not only would excitement be dangerous, but might prove fatal. This was a fresh blow to Billot.

He knew the fact of her swoon; but from the moment when Pitou told him how he saw her reopen her eyes and return to herself, Billot's mind had been preoccupied — if it may be so expressed — with only the moral causes and consequences of this event; but now, as ill luck would have it, here was a physical result, outside of moral cause and effect.

This physical consequence was a cerebral fever, which had declared itself the day before, and threatened to reach a high degree of intensity.

Doctor Raynal was busy fighting this fever, with all the means used for such cases by old-fashioned medical experts, — bleeding and mustard-plasters included; but this treatment, active as it was, did not overtake the malady. The struggle had hardly begun between disease and remedy, and since morning Catherine had been a prey to violent delirium.

In this delirium the young girl undoubtedly said some strange things; so, under the pretext of shielding her from excitement, Doctor Raynal had kept her mother well out of the way, as now he meant to keep her father.

Mother Billot was seated on a stool, in the shadow of the huge chimney. Her head was buried in her hands, and she seemed to be a stranger to what was going on around her.

She was insensible to the noise of the wagon, to the barking of the dogs, to Billot's entrance into the kitchen; but she roused herself at the sound of his voice, disputing with the Doctor, and began to collect her wits, which had been drowned in her gloomy revery.

She accordingly raised her head, opened her eyes, fixed her dull look on Billot, and cried: "Hey, it 's our old man!"

Rising, she tottered forward with open arms, and threw herself upon the breast of Billot, who looked at her in a wild sort of way, as if he hardly knew her.

"Hey," he said, as the sweat of agony stood on his brow, "what's been going on here?"

"This," said the Doctor, "that your daughter has what we call acute meningitis; and when patients have that disease, they must take only certain remedies, and see only certain persons."

"But is it dangerous, this sickness, Doctor? Will she die of it?" asked Billot.

"People die of all sorts of diseases, my dear Monsieur Billot, if not properly cared for; but let me care for your girl in my own way, and she will not die."

"Truly, Doctor?"

"I will answer for her; but it is important, for two or three days, that only myself, and the persons whom I designate, should enter her chamber."

Billot sighed. He believed himself conquered, but made one more effort.

"May n't I at least *see* her?" he asked, in the tone of a child begging a last favor.

"And if you see her, if you embrace her, will you leave me in peace three days thereafter, without any more teasing?"

"I swear it!"

"Very well! — Come in!"

The Doctor opened the door of Catherine's room, and Father Billot could see the young girl, her eyes wild, her face flushed and feverish, her forehead bound with a band wet in icy water.

She muttered a few broken words, and when Father Billot pressed his pale and trembling lips on her damp

brow, it seemed to him as if he caught, among her incoherent words, the name of Isidore.

On the threshold of the door, which led into the kitchen, were several friends: Mother Billot, with clasped hands; Pitou, standing on tiptoe, and trying to see over her shoulder; and two or three day-laborers, who, being in the house, were curious to see for themselves what was the matter with their young mistress.

Faithful to his promise, Father Billot retired as soon as he had kissed his child; only he came away with a frowning brow and dark looks, murmuring: "Go to, go to! I see it was indeed time for me to come home!"

He re-entered the kitchen, whither his wife followed him mechanically; and whither Pitou was about to follow, when the Doctor pulled him by the flap of his blouse, and said hastily: "Don't quit the farmhouse. I must speak to thee!"

Somewhat surprised, Pitou turned, and was about to inquire of the Doctor of what use he could be; when the latter, in a mysterious way, pressed a finger to his lips, by way of enforcing silence.

Pitou therefore remained standing upright in the kitchen, on precisely the same spot where he had been before, imitating, though in a fashion more grotesque than poetic and beautiful, those terminal gods of classic antiquity, who, with their feet rooted closely in the earth, marked the limits of their own particular domains.

In five minutes the door of Catherine's chamber opened, and the Doctor's voice was heard calling for Pitou.

"Hey?" said Pitou, coming out of his prolonged revery. "What do you want of me, Doctor?"

"Come and help Madame Clement hold Catherine, while I bleed her for the third time."

"A third time!" murmured Mother Billot. "They 'll bleed her the third time! My God! Oh my God!"

"Woman, woman," muttered Billot, in a severe voice, "all this would not have happened if you had watched over your child better."

Then he entered his own chamber, from which he had been absent three months, while Pitou, raised to the rank of surgical student, by Doctor Raynal, went into Catherine's room.

CHAPTER L.

PITOU AS SICK-NURSE.

Pitou was much surprised that he could be thought good for anything in the sick-room, by Doctor Raynal; but he would have been yet more astonished had he known that the aid expected from him was moral, rather than physical.

As a matter of fact, the Doctor had remarked, in her delirium, that Catherine generally coupled Pitou's name with Isidore's; that is, she best remembered the last faces which had been in her normal mind, — Isidore's, when she closed her eyes, Pitou's, when she reopened them.

As the sick girl did not pronounce these two names with the same accent, Doctor Raynal — a no less careful observer than his illustrious namesake, the author of the "Philosophical History of the Indies" — promptly inferred from these different, but equally expressive tones, used by the girl, that *Ange Pitou* must be the name of a friend, and *Isidore* the name of a lover; and he concluded that it would not be disadvantageous to have the friend near the invalid, with whom she could talk about her lover.

To Doctor Raynal, — and without wishing to decry the acumen of Doctor Raynal, we must hasten to say that the whole thing seemed very simple, — to Doctor Raynal, everything was now clear as day, and it was only necessary for him to do what physicians always have done in their professional studies, — group the facts together, — in order to learn the entire truth.

Everybody in Villers Cotterets knew that George de Charny was killed on that terrible night at Versailles; and that on the evening of the next day, his brother Isidore, summoned by the Count de Charny, started for Paris.

Now Pitou had found Catherine in a swoon on the road between Villers Cotterets and Pisseleu, which is also the highway from Boursonnes to Paris. He bore her, insensible, to the farmhouse; and as a result of this occurrence, the girl was seized with brain fever. This fever led to delirium; and in this delirium she implored a fugitive to return, and called that fugitive *Isidore*.

It was therefore very easy for the Doctor to divine the secret of Catherine's malady, which was really the secret of her heart.

In this conjunction of facts the Doctor reasoned as follows:

The first need, of a patient with a head-trouble, is calmness.

What will bring this tranquillity to Catherine's heart? News as to the whereabouts of her lover.

From whom can she obtain this news? From somebody who knows about him.

And who is likely to know about him? Pitou, who has just come from Paris.

This reasoning was at once simple and logical, and the Doctor compassed it without difficulty.

Although it was as surgeon's assistant that he first employed Pitou; yet the Doctor could have done very well without Pitou in that capacity, for it was not a new bleeding of the patient which was proposed, but only a reopening of the former gash.

The Doctor lifted Catherine's arm softly from the bed, loosened the knot which compressed the wound.

separated its unhealed lips with his thumbs, and the blood flowed.

Seeing this blood, for which he would gladly have sacrificed his own, Pitou felt his strength begin to fail.

He therefore went and sat down it Madame Clement's armchair, sobbing, with his hands over his eyes; and each sob drew these words from his heart: "Oh Mademoiselle Catherine! Poor Mademoiselle Catherine!"

At each of these words he said to himself, with that double mentality which considers at the same moment the present and the past: "Certainly she loves Monsieur Isidore more than I love her. Certainly she suffers more than I ever suffered, for they have been obliged to bleed her because she is delirious with brain fever, — two very disagreeable things, which I never had."

As he drew this fresh blood from Catherine's arm, the Doctor, who had not taken his eyes from Pitou, felicitated himself on having shrewdly guessed that in this young man his patient would have a devoted friend.

As the Doctor expected, this slight flow of blood lessened the fever. The arteries in her temples beat more peacefully. Her breast was freer. Her breathing, which had been labored, became mild and regular. Her pulse fell from one hundred and ten pulsations to eighty-five. Everything indicated a quiet night for the girl.

Raynal breathed more freely in his turn. He gave Madame Clement all necessary instructions, — among others this strange direction, that she should sleep two or three hours, while Pitou watched in her stead.

Then, with a sign for Pitou to follow, the Doctor returned to the kitchen. Pitou did follow, and they found Mother Billot still buried in the shadow of the great chimney-piece.

The poor woman was so stunned, that she hardly

understood what the Doctor said, though his were comforting words for a mother's heart.

"Come, come! Courage, Mother Billot!" said the Doctor. "Things are going as well as we can expect."

The good woman seemed like one coming from another world as she said: "Oh, dear Monsieur Raynal, is it really true, what you say?"

"Yes. She won't have a bad night. Don't be anxious, even if you hear some crying in your daughter's chamber; and, above all, don't go in there."

"My God, my God!" said Mother Billot, with an accent of deep sorrow. "That's hard, that a mother may n't go into her child's room!"

"What would you have?" said the Doctor. "This is my absolute prescription, — neither you nor Monsieur Billot."

"But who will take care of my poor girl?"

"Be easy as to that! We have both Madame Clement and Pitou."

"What? Pitou?"

"Yes, Pitou. I find him very capable in medical matters. I shall take him to Villers Cotterets, where I will have a prescription prepared by the apothecary. Pitou will bring back this potion. Madame Clement will have the invalid take it by the spoonful. If anything unexpected should happen, Pitou, who is to watch with Madame Clement, will put his long legs in motion, and be at my place in ten minutes! — Hey, Pitou?"

"In *five*, Monsieur Raynal," said Pitou, with such confidence in himself as left no room for doubt in the minds of his auditors.

"You see, Madame Billot!" said the Doctor.

"Well, so be it!" said Mother Billot; "only, say a hopeful word to poor father."

"Where is he?" asked the Doctor.

"Up in this side room."

"Useless!" said a voice from the door, up a short flight of stairs. "I have heard everything."

As the three interlocutors turned at this unexpected response, they saw the farmer standing, pale and upright, in the doorway.

Then, as if this was all he wished to hear or say, Billot returned to his own room, making no comment whatever on the arrangements Raynal had made for the night.

Pitou kept his word. In the course of a quarter-hour he returned with the composing draught, ornamented with the label and guaranteed by the seal of Master Pacquenaud, — pharmacist at Villers Cotterets, like his father before him.

The messenger crossed the kitchen and entered Catherine's chamber, not only without hindrance, but without hearing anything from anybody, except a few words from Madame Billot: "Ah, it 's thee, Pitou?" to which he only answered: "Yes, Ma'am Billot!"

Catherine was asleep, as the physician had foreseen, and her slumber was quiet. Near by — stretched out in a big armchair, her feet on the andirons — was the nurse, a prey to the special drowsiness peculiar to the honorable class to which she belonged. Having neither the right to sleep, nor yet the strength to keep awake, these nurses seem like Virgil's unfortunate ghosts. Forbidden to descend into the Fields Elysian, and yet unable to return to the light of earth, they wander like shades on the borders of night, continually hovering between slumber and wakefulness.

In the state of somnambulism habitual with her she received the bottle from Pitou's hands, uncorked it, set it

on the lightstand, and placed near it a silver spoon, so that the patient might only wait as short a time as possible, in her next hour of need. Then the nurse returned to her armchair.

As for Pitou, he sat on the window-seat, from which he could easily see Catherine.

The sentiment of pity which he felt, in thinking about Catherine, was not diminished by the sight of her. When he was permitted to touch her disease with his finger, if we may so express it, and to see for himself what terrible ravages could be committed by the abstraction called *love*, he was more than ever disposed to sacrifice his love to hers, — *his* love, which seemed to him a very simple affair, compared with the importunate, feverish, terrible passion, which appeared capable of consuming the young girl in its fierce flame.

Unconsciously to himself, these thoughts put him into the condition most favorable to the Doctor's plan. In fact, that sensible man rightly believed, that the remedy Catherine chiefly needed, was what is commonly called a *confidant*.

Though not a great physician, one thing is sure, — that, as we have said, Raynal was a quick observer.

About an hour after Pitou's return, Catherine moved, sighed, and opened her eyes.

In justice to the worthy Clement it should be said, that at the first movement made by the invalid the nurse was standing by her side, stammering: "Here I am, Mademoiselle! What do you want?"

"I am thirsty!" murmured the sick girl, returning to life through physical distress, and a feeling of bodily need.

The nurse poured into a spoon several drops of the sleeping mixture brought by Pitou, pressed the spoon

between Catherine's parched lips and set teeth, and the girl mechanically swallowed the soothing liquid.

Then Catherine let her head fall on the pillow, and the nurse, satisfied with the conviction that she had fulfilled her duty, again sought her comfortable armchair.

Pitou uttered a sigh, believing that Catherine had not even seen him.

Pitou was in error. When he aided Madame Clement to raise the girl's head, as she swallowed the decoction, as her head fell upon the pillow, Catherine half opened her eyes, and in the misty view which she had through her lashes, she fancied she could see Pitou ; but in the delirium of fever, which had now endured for three days, she had seen so many phantoms, appearing only to vanish, that she now regarded the real Pitou as if he were but another phantasm.

Pitou's sigh was not a very loud one ; but thereby this apparition of her old friend, towards whom she had sometimes been so unjust, made a deeper impression on her delirious mind than all the preceding phantoms. As she lay with closed eyes, her calmer and less feverish mind seemed to see before her the brave traveller, whom she had imagined, in the broken thread of her ideas, as being with her father in Paris, — as was partly true.

The result of this was, that after being awhile tormented with the doubt if Pitou was a reality, and not the evolution of feverish dream, she timidly opened her eyes, and looked about, to see if he was still in the same place.

It goes without saying that he had not budged. Seeing her eyes reopen, and rest on him, Pitou's face brightened. Seeing those eyes once more filled with life and intelligence, he extended his arms.

"Pitou!" she murmured.

"Mademoiselle Catherine!" exclaimed Pitou.

"Hey?" said Madame Clement, suddenly turning.

Catherine gave the nurse a restless glance; and then, with a sigh, she again let her head fall upon the pillow.

Pitou surmised at once that Madame Clement disturbed the girl; so he went to the nurse, and said to her very softly: "Don't deprive yourself of sleep. You know very well that Doctor Raynal had me stay here to watch Mademoiselle, purposely so that you could take some repose."

"Ah, yes! That 's true," said Madame Clement; and as if she only awaited this permission, the good woman once more disposed herself comfortably in her big chair, and sighed.

After an instant of silence she indicated, by her snoring, — which was at first timid, but grew rapidly bolder, till in a few minutes it dominated the whole situation, — that she had entered the enchanted land of sleep with all sails set, — a land she usually visited only in disjointed dreams.

Catherine noted Pitou's movements with astonishment. With the peculiar acuteness of invalids she did not lose a word of what Pitou said to Madame Clement.

He stayed near the nurse a moment, to be sure that her sleep was sound. When there was no longer any doubt of it, he approached Catherine, shaking his head, and letting his arms listlessly fall.

"Ah, Mademoiselle Catherine! I well knew that you loved him; but I did not know that you loved him so much as all this."

CHAPTER LI.

PITOU AS A CONFIDANT.

Pitou spoke these words in such a fashion that Catherine could discern therein, not only the expression of his great sorrow, but a proof of his great kindness.

Each of these two sentiments, emanating simultaneously from the heart of the brave fellow who was gazing at her so sadly, touched the sick girl in an equal degree.

So long as Isidore lived at Boursonnes, so long as she felt that her lover was only three quarters of a league away, — in a word, so long as Catherine was happy, — except for little annoyances, such as Pitou's persistence in accompanying them in their walks, and some slight disquietude raised by certain paragraphs in her father's letters, — so long as this happy time lasted, Catherine buried her love in herself, like hid treasure, to be safely guarded, lest a single farthing of it should tumble into any heart save her own; but now that Isidore was gone, while Catherine remained behind, and her felicity was thereby changed to infelicity, and the poor girl was vainly seeking for courage equal to her former self-satisfaction, she felt that it would be a great solace to meet some one with whom she could gossip about her fine gentleman, who had left her so suddenly, without being able to say anything positive about the date of his return.

She could not talk about Isidore, either with Madame Clement, Doctor Raynal, or her mother, and she was suffering sharply from this enforced silence; when suddenly,

at the moment when she least expected it, Providence placed a friend before her eyes, just as they were re-opening to life and reason, — a friend who, for an instant, she suspected of not having kept silence concerning her affairs, but whose first words banished all such doubt from her breast.

Therefore, when these compassionate words escaped so painfully from the heart of Aunt Angelica's poor nephew, Catherine responded, without the least attempt to conceal her sentiments: "Ah, Monsieur Pitou, you see how unhappy I am."

From that moment the dike was broken through on one side, and the current flowed freely from the other.

"Anyhow, dear Mademoiselle Catherine," said Pitou, "though it gives me no great pleasure to talk about Monsieur Isidore, if that subject is most agreeable to you, I will give you some news of him."

"Thou?" asked Catherine.

"Oh yes!" said Pitou.

"Thou hast seen him?"

"No, but I know he reached Paris in good health."

"And how knowest thou that?" she asked, her face radiant with love.

This look drew a great sigh from Pitou; but he answered, in his usual conscientious way: "I know about him through my young friend Sebastien Gilbert, whom Monsieur Isidore overtook that night, just beyond Clear Water Spring, and carried to Paris on his crupper."

Making an effort, Catherine raised herself on her elbow, and said pointedly, looking full at Pitou: "Then he is in Paris?"

"Well, no," objected Pitou, "he can't be there at present."

"And where can he be?" languishingly asked the girl.

"What 's to be done?"

"Gracious! *You* must answer that question your own self, Mademoiselle."

"There must be some way out —"

"If there *is* a way, we must adopt it," said Pitou.

"I dare not!"

"How, you *dare* not?"

"I dare not tell thee what ought to be done."

"The means are in my hands, and yet you dare not tell me?"

"Oh Pitou —!"

"Ah, that is not right, Mademoiselle Catherine! I would n't have believed you could have so little confidence in me."

"I do not lack confidence in thee, dear Pitou!"

"That sounds better," responded Pitou, much flattered by her growing familiarity.

"But it will be a bothersome task for thee, my friend!"

"Oh, it won't be hard for me. Don't let that trouble you, Mademoiselle."

"Thou wilt consent in advance, to do what I ask."

"Certain sure! Gracious goodness! — at least, if it is n't impossible."

"It is very simple, on the contrary."

"Well, if it 's so simple, speak out!"

"Go to Mother Colombe's —"

"The barley-candy seller?"

"Yes. She is also distributor for the letters which come by post."

"Ah, I see! And I am to tell her to deliver your letters only to yourself?"

"Thou wilt bid her give my letters only to *thyself*, Pitou."

"To me? Ah, yes. At first I did n't understand," said Pitou; and he sighed three or four times.

"That is the surest way, thou seest? At least, unless thou dost refuse me this service."

"Me? *Refuse?* Mademoiselle Catherine!"

"Thanks, then, thanks!"

"I 'll go! Certainly, I 'll go — to-morrow."

"To-morrow will be too late, dear Pitou. This must be done to-day!"

"So be it, Mademoiselle. I 'll go to-day, this morning, right off!"

"Thou 'rt a brave lad, Pitou!" said Catherine. "How I love thee!"

"Oh Mademoiselle, only say such words to me, and I 'll go through fire for your sake."

"See what time it is, Pitou!"

He looked at the girl's watch, hanging over the mantelpiece, and said: "Half-past five in the morning."

"Well, my good friend —"

"Well, Mademoiselle?"

"It is perhaps time —"

"To go and see Mother Colombe? — I am at your orders. — But you had better take a little medicine. The Doctor advised a spoonful every half-hour."

"My dear Pitou," said Catherine, herself pouring out a spoonful of the druggist's compound, and looking at Pitou with glances which went straight to his heart, "what *thou* doest for me is better than all the decoctions on earth."

"That 's why Doctor Raynal said I had such an aptitude for medical study!"

"But where canst thou pretend to be going, Pitou, so that nobody at the farm shall have any suspicion?"

"Oh, be easy as to that!" said Pitou, taking his

hat. Then he paused to ask: "Shall I wake Madame Clement?"

"Oh no! Let her sleep, poor woman! I have no need of anything, except —"

"Except what?"

Catherine smiled.

"Ah yes, I catch on," murmured Cupid's messenger, — "except the letter from Monsieur Isidore." After an instant's silence he added: "Well, be calm! If it 's there, you shall have it. If it is n't there —!"

"Well, if it is n't there?" anxiously asked Catherine.

"If it is n't there! — Well, for the sake of having you look at me again, as you did just now, — of having you smile on me again, as you did just now, — of having you call me your dear Pitou and your friend, — well, if the letter is n't there, I 'll go to Paris after it."

"Good and kind heart!" murmured Catherine, following Pitou with her eyes, as he left the chamber. Then, tired with her long conversation, she laid her head on her pillow once more.

Ten minutes later the girl could hardly tell herself whether what had happened was a real accompaniment of returning reason, or a dream born of her delirium; but this was sure, that a refreshing and sweet calm had spread from her heart, throughout her feverish and aching extremities.

As Pitou passed through the kitchen, Mother Billot raised her head. She had not been abed, and for three days she had scarcely slept. During these three days she had hardly quitted her stool, buried under the shadows of the great chimney-piece, whence her eyes, in default of seeing her daughter's self, could at least see the door of her daughter's room, which the mother was forbidden to enter.

"What is it, Pitou?" she asked.

"Everything goes well, Mother Billot!"

"Whither goest thou?"

"To Villers Cotterets."

"What to do there?"

Pitou hesitated. Pitou was not the man for petty evasions.

"What am I to do there?" he repeated, to gain time.

"Yes," said Father Billot's voice: "My wife asks thee, what thou art to do there."

"I 'm going to let Doctor Raynal know —"

"He told thee not to rouse him, unless there was some change."

"Well," said Pitou, "when Mademoiselle is so much better, it seems to me that 's a change."

Whether it was because Father Billot found Pitou's response so peremptory, or whether he did not wish to bother a fellow who brought him such good news, Billot raised no further objection to Pitou's departure; and the lad passed along as soon as the farmer re-entered his chamber, and Mother Billot let her head fall again on her breast.

Pitou reached Villers Cotterets at a quarter-past six in the morning. He scrupulously awoke Doctor Raynal, to tell him how much better Catherine was, and to ask if anything different should be done.

The Doctor questioned him about his night-watch; and to the great astonishment of Pitou, who was as circumspect as possible in his answers, the good fellow perceived that the Doctor soon knew what had passed between the lad and Catherine, almost as correctly as if he had been concealed in some corner of the chamber, behind the window-curtains or bed-hangings, overhearing the conversation of the girl with her confidant.

The Doctor promised to call at the farm during the day, giving but one direction, that Catherine should be *regularly dosed from the same cask;* and with this he dismissed Pitou, who meditated some time over these enigmatical words, finally concluding the Doctor meant him to continue his chats with the young girl about Isidore de Charny.

From the Doctor's, Pitou went to Mother Colombe's. The letter-agent lived at the end of the Rue Lormet, at the other side of the village. Pitou reached her house just as she was opening her door.

Mother Colombe was a great friend of his Aunt Angelica; but this friendship for the aunt did not prevent her from appreciating the nephew.

As he entered her shop, full of gingerbread and barley candy, Pitou began to realize, as he had not before, that if he wished to succeed in his negotiation, and have the agent deliver Catherine's letters to himself, it would be necessary to employ, if not bribery, at least persuasion; so he bought two sticks of barley sugar and a junk of gingerbread.

The purchase made and paid for, he ventured to ask the desired favor.

There were grave difficulties. Letters were to be delivered only to those persons to whom they were addressed, — or, at least, only to those who brought written orders from those persons.

Mother Colombe did not doubt Pitou's word, but she insisted upon his having written authority.

Pitou saw that he must make a sacrifice. He promised to bring next day a receipt for the letter, if there was a letter, and an order for him to take any more that might come for Catherine; and this promise he accompanied with a second investment in barley candy and gingerbread.

How could she refuse such a favor to such a persuasive hand, above all, to a hand that persuaded so liberally, so sweetly.

Mother Colombe made a few more feeble objections, but ended by authorizing Pitou to follow her to the post-house, where she would deliver to him Catherine's letter, if one had come for her.

Pitou followed, eating his two wedges of gingerbread and sucking his four sticks of barley sugar.

Never, *never* before had he permitted himself such extravagance; but, as we know, owing to the liberality of Doctor Gilbert, Pitou was comparatively rich.

When he came to the Great Square he climbed the bars enclosing the fountain, applied his mouth to one of the four jets then running, and for five minutes absorbed the entire stream of water, not losing a drop.

As he came down from the fountain he threw a glance about the square, and saw that in the middle of it a staging had been erected, a sort of theatre.

Then he remembered that, at the time of his departure after Sebastien, there was talk about a convention at Villers Cotterets, to form the basis of a federation between the surrounding villages and the chief town of the section.

Various private occurrences, enchaining his interest, had made him forget this political event, which was, nevertheless, not unimportant.

He at once thought of the twenty-five louis which, when he came from Paris, Doctor Gilbert had given him, to aid in putting the Haramont National Guard on the best possible footing.

He threw back his head with pride, dreaming of the splendid figure which, — thanks to these twenty-five

goldpieces — the thirty-three guardsmen now under his orders would make.

This helped him to digest the two wedges of gingerbread and four sticks of barley sugar, which, added to the jorum of water he had swallowed, might have proved too much for the warmth of the gastric juice with which nature had provided him, and lain heavily on his stomach, if he had not also possessed that excellent aid to digestion which we call *self-esteem*.

CHAPTER LII.

PITOU AS A GEOGRAPHER.

WHILE Pitou was drinking, while Pitou was digesting, while Pitou was cogitating, Mother Colombe finished her journey, and entered the posthouse.

This did not disturb Pitou. The posthouse was situated opposite the Rue Neuve, a sort of lane, running from that part of the park known as the Allée des Soupirs, — the scene of lugubrious memories.

With fifteen of his long strides he could overtake Mother Colombe. He took these fifteen long strides, and reached the threshold of the posthouse, just as Madame Colombe came out, with the packet of letters in her hand.

Amidst these letters was one carefully folded, and enclosed in a handsome envelop, which was daintily fastened with a waxen seal.

This letter was addressed to Catherine Billot. It was evidently the letter Catherine expected.

According to their agreement, this letter was delivered, by the agent, to her customer for barley sugar, who at once departed for Pisseleu, in a mental state at once joyful and sorrowful: joyful, because he had good news for Catherine; sorrowful, because, in the source of the young girl's happiness, his lips found a fountain of bitter waters.

Despite this bitterness, the messenger was so generous-hearted that, in order to carry this confounded letter the

quicker, he unconsciously accelerated his walk into a trot, and his trot into a gallop.

Fifty yards from the farmhouse he suddenly stopped, rightly thinking, if he arrived in such a winded condition, and all covered with sweat, this would inspire Father Billot with distrust, since the good man appeared to have already entered the narrow and thorny way of suspicion.

At the risk therefore of being a minute or two late, Pitou decided to accomplish the rest of his journey at a more dignified pace; and to this end he walked with the gravity of some pretentious personage in classic tragedy, which, indeed, Catherine's confidence in Pitou caused him to resemble. As he passed by the side of the house whereon her chamber was located, he saw that the nurse had swung open half the window, doubtless to let fresh air into the room.

Pitou thrust first his nose and then his eyes into this opening. More he could not do, because of the bars; for in that time and region the windows all opened sidewise, on hinges, like double doors, and the shutters were carefully provided with bars, especially on the ground floor.

This enabled him to see Catherine awake and expectant, and for her to see Pitou mysteriously making signs.

"A letter! A letter!" babbled the girl.

"Hus–s–s–sh!" said Pitou.

Looking about him like a poacher, who wishes to avoid the gamekeepers, and finding that they two were entirely alone, he scaled the letter through the opening, with such skill that it lighted in exactly the place she had arranged for it, beside her pillow.

Then, without waiting for the thanks which were sure

to come, he drew himself from the window, and kept on his way towards the door of the house, where he found Billot standing on the threshold.

But for the projection of the wall, the farmer must have seen what had taken place; and in his present attitude of mind, God knows what would have happened, if his surmises had been changed into certainties.

Honest Pitou no sooner found himself thus unexpectedly face to face with the farmer, than he felt that he was blushing up to his ears, in spite of himself.

"Oh Monsieur Billot, how you frightened me!" he said.

"Frightened, — thee, Pitou, — a captain in the National Guard, — a conqueror of the Bastille! — *Frightened?*"

"What would you have? There are some moments, — Great Heavens! — when one is n't expecting — "

"Yes," said Billot, "especially if a fellow expects to meet a girl, and runs into her father, — hey?"

"Oh Monsieur Billot, as to that, *no!* I did not expect to see Mademoiselle Catherine! Oh, no! Although she 's getting better little by little, as I hope, she is still too ill to get up."

"Hast nothing to say?" asked Billot.

"To whom?"

"To Catherine!"

"Oh yes, I have to report that Monsieur Raynal says she 's doing very well, and that he 'll call in the course of the day; but somebody else can tell her that, as well as I."

"Besides, thou must be hungry!"

"Hungry? — Peuh!"

"What? Thou 'rt not hungry?" cried the farmer, very much surprised.

Pitou saw that he had made an asinine blunder. For

Pitou not to be hungry, at eight in the morning, would indicate a derangement in the equilibrium of nature.

"Certainly, oh yes, I *am* hungry!" said he.

"Very well, go in and eat. The hands are already at breakfast, but they've kept a place for thee."

Pitou entered; and Billot watched him, although the lad's good-nature had almost disarmed the farmer's suspicions. He saw Pitou sit down at the upper end of the table, and attack the round loaf and his plate of bacon, as if he had not already in his stomach two balls of gingerbread, four sticks of barley candy, and a pint of water.

It is true, in all probability, that Pitou's stomach had been liberalized in the two hours since he saw Mother Colombe.

Pitou could not do many things at a time, but what he did, he did well. Intrusted by Catherine with a commission, he executed it well. Invited to breakfast by Billot, he breakfasted well.

Billot continued to watch him; but seeing that Pitou did not turn his eyes from his plate, that his interest was absorbed in the bottle of cider in front of him, and that not once did he look at Catherine's door, the farmer finally concluded that the little trip to Villers Cotterets had no other motive than Pitou had avowed.

Towards the end of Pitou's breakfast Catherine's door opened, and Madame Clement came into the kitchen, with the habitually humble smile of a nurse on her lips. She came, in her turn, for a cup of coffee.

Of course it is to be taken for granted that at six o'clock, a quarter-hour after Pitou's departure, she had made her first appearance in the kitchen, to get her little glass of brandy, — the only thing, as she said, which sustained her, especially when she had to watch all night.

As soon as she appeared Madame Billot ran to her, and Monsieur Billot came into the house. Both wished to hear about Catherine's health.

"She 's doing very well," replied Madame Clement; "although I believe that just now she 's getting a little delirious."

"What 's that?" said the farmer. "A little delirium? Has that taken her again?"

"Oh my God! My poor child!" murmured Mother Billot.

Pitou raised his head and listened.

"Yes!" continued the nurse. "She talks about a city she calls Sardinia, and a country named Turin; and she calls for Monsieur Pitou to tell her which is the city and which the country."

"Here I am!" said Pitou, swallowing the rest of his can of cider, and wiping his mouth on his sleeve; but a glance at Father Billot checked him, so he added: "That is, if Monsieur Billot judges it proper for me to give Mademoiselle the explanations she wants."

"Why not?" said Mother Billot. "If she asks for thee, poor child, go to her, my boy. Did n't Monsieur Raynal declare thee a good helper?"

"Gracious!" said Pitou, innocently. "Ask Madame Clement how we cared for Mademoiselle all night. Madame Clement never slept a wink, the good woman, — no more than I."

It showed much cunning on the part of Pitou to attack the nurse's vulnerable point. She had taken a prolonged snooze, from midnight till six o'clock; and to declare that she had not slept a moment, was to make her a friend, — yes, and more than a friend, — an out-and-out accomplice.

"That 's all right!" said Father Billot. "If our

Catherine asks for thee, go to her. Perhaps the time will come when she 'll ask for her mother and me."

Pitou felt instinctively that there was a storm in the air; and, like the shepherd out in the fields, though ready to confront the storm if necessary, he looked about in advance for some shelter for his head.

This shelter was Haramont, where he was king. King? — He was more than king. He was Commander of the National Guard, he was Lafayette!

Besides, many duties summoned him to Haramont. So he decided that, after making the proper arrangements with Catherine, he would return promptly to Haramont.

Thus meditating he entered the sick-chamber, having the permission of both the farmer and his wife.

Catherine was waiting impatiently. By the color of her cheeks and the fire in her eyes, one might well think, as Madame Clement had said, that she was still under the dominion of the fever.

Hardly had he shut the door when Catherine — recognizing his step, for which she had been longing an hour — turned quickly towards him, and extended both her hands. "Ah, it 's thou! How late thou art!"

"That 's not my fault, Mademoiselle! Your father detained me."

"My father?"

"His very self! Oh, he suspects something. Besides," added Pitou, with a sigh, "I did n't hurry! I knew you had what you most wanted."

"Yes, Pitou, yes," said the girl, lowering her eyes. "Yes, and I thank thee!" and then she added, in a low voice: "Thou art so good, Pitou, and I love thee so!"

"You are very good, yourself, Mademoiselle," answered Pitou, ready to cry; for he felt that all this friendship was but a reflection of her love for another. Modest as

the brave fellow was, he could not help feeling humiliated, in his heart of hearts, at being only the moon to Charny's sun ; so he answered quickly : "I have come to set you right, because they told me you wanted to know something."

Catherine put her hand on her heart, seeking Isidore's letter, in order to get courage from it for questioning Pitou. At last she made an effort, and said : "Pitou, thou art so wise, perhaps thou canst tell me something about Sardinia."

Pitou invoked all his geographical reminiscences. "Wait a minute, — wait a minute, Mademoiselle ! I ought to know that. One of the things the Abbé Fortier tried to teach me was geography. Wait a minute ! Sardinia ? I 'll get there ! — Ah, if I could only catch the first word, I could tell you all the rest."

"Oh, try, Pitou, try ! " said Catherine, clasping her hands.

"Parbleu, that 's what I *am* doing ! — Sardinia — Sardinia ! — Ah, I have it."

Catherine breathed more freely.

"Sardinia, so named by the Romans, is one of the three large islands of the Western Mediterranean Sea. It is south of Corsica, from which it is separated by the straits of Bonifacio, and forms part of the Sardinian States, which derive their name from it, and are called the Kingdom of Sardinia. It measures sixty leagues from north to south, and sixteen from east to west, and has fifty-four thousand inhabitants. Cagliari is the capital. — There, that 's what I know about Sardinia, Mademoiselle Catherine."

"Oh Heaven," said the girl, "how happy it must make one to know so many things ! "

"The fact is," replied Pitou, as happy in his self-respect

as he was wounded in his love, "the fact is, I have a good memory."

Catherine ventured to say, with less timidity: "Now that I have heard what there is to hear about Sardinia, tell me about Turin."

"Turin? Certainly, Mademoiselle Catherine. I ask nothing better than to tell you all about it, — if I can remember."

"Try to recollect. This is the most important, Pitou, — dear Pitou!"

"The Devil! If it is so important, it must — Besides, if I can't recollect, I 'll make inquiries."

"It is — it is — what I must know right away!" insisted Catherine. "Think, my dear Pitou, think!"

She spoke these words in so caressing a voice, that they sent a thrill through every part of his body.

"I *am* thinking, Mademoiselle," said he, "yes, I *am* thinking."

She covered her eyes. Pitou threw back his head, as if to interrogate the ceiling.

"Turin? Turin? Gracious, Mademoiselle, it 's no harder than Sardinia. — Sardinia is a large island in the Mediterranean Sea. There are three great islands in the Western Mediterranean: Sardinia, which belongs to the King of Piedmont, Corsica, which belongs to the King of France, Sicily, which belongs to the King of Naples; whereas Turin is simply a capital."

"What didst thou say about Sardinia?"

"I said that Sardinia belongs to the King of Piedmont, and I 'm sure I 'm not mistaken, Mademoiselle."

"It is exactly so, my dear Pitou. In his letter Isidore says he is going to Turin, in Piedmont!"

"Ah," said Pitou, "I understand now. — Good, good. good! It is to Turin that Monsieur Isidore has been

sent by the King, and you are pumping me, in order to find out where *he* is!"

"Why should I do so, if not for his sake?" said the girl. "What else do I care about Sardinia, Piedmont, Turin? As long as he was not there, I was ignorant which was the capital and which the state, and little cared I; but now *he* has gone to Turin, — do you comprehend, dear Pitou, — and so I want to know about Turin."

He uttered a great sigh, shook his head; but none the less he made a further effort to satisfy Catherine.

"Turin — hold on! — Yes — Turin, capital of Piedmont. Turin, Turin! I 've got it! Turin, called by the ancients, *Bodincemagus, Taurasia, Colonia Julia, Augusta Taurinorum;* to-day the capital of Piedmont and the Sardinian States; situated on the Po and the Doire; one of the most beautiful cities in Europe. Population, one hundred and twenty-five thousand; reigning King, Charles Emmanuel. There 's your Turin, Mademoiselle Catherine."

"And how far is Turin from Pisseleu, Monsieur Pitou? Thou, who knowest so much, ought to know that."

"Gracious!" said Pitou. "I can tell you how far Turin is from Paris; but from Pisseleu, that 's harder!"

"Well, tell me first about Paris. Then we can add the eighteen leagues from Paris to Pisseleu."

"That 's so!" said Pitou, who then continued his lesson "Distance from Paris, two hundred and six leagues; from Rome, one hundred and forty; from Constantinople —"

"I only need to know about Paris, my dear friend. Two hundred and six leagues plus eighteen, — two hundred and twenty-four. So he is two hundred and twenty-four leagues away from me. Only three days ago he was right here, only three-quarters of a league from my side;

and to-day — to-day," added Catherine, melting into tears and wringing her hands, "to-day he is two hundred and twenty-four leagues away from me."

"Oh, not yet," timidly suggested Pitou. "He only started day before yesterday. As yet he is only half-way, and hardly —"

"Where is he, then?"

"Oh, as to that, I know nothing about it," responded Pitou. "The Abbé Fortier taught us all about the kingdoms and their capitals, but he said nothing about the roads leading to them."

"Then this is all thou knowest, dear Pitou?"

"Oh Lord, yes!" said the geographer, humiliated that the limits of his knowledge were so soon reached, — "except that Turin is a great place for aristocrats."

"What do you mean by that?"

"That Turin, Mademoiselle, is the rendezvous for all the princes, all the princesses, all the fugitives, — D'Artois, Condé, Madame de Polignac, — a parcel of brigands, who conspire against the nation, and whose heads will be cut off some day, it is to be hoped, by a very ingenious machine in process of invention by Monsieur Guillotin."

"Oh Monsieur Pitou!"

"What then, Mademoiselle?"

"You 're getting ferocious again, as after your first visit to Paris."

"Ferocious? Me? Ah, that 's true. Yes, yes, yes! Monsieur Isidore is one of the aristocrats, and you are afraid on his account!"

Then he added, with one of those big sighs, which we have more than once noticed: "Let us talk no more of that! Let us talk of yourself, Mademoiselle Catherine, and of the way in which I can be most useful to you."

"My dear Pitou, the letter which I received this morning is probably not the only one I shall receive —"

"And you wish me to go after the others, as I did after this one?"

"Pitou, thou hast begun by being so good —"

"That I had better keep on, — would you say?"

"Yes."

"I ask nothing better."

"Thou seest, I am so watched by my father, that I cannot go to the village."

"Ah yes! but I must tell you that he watches me also, this Father Billot. I can see it in his eye."

"Yes, but thou, Pitou, he cannot follow thee to Haramont, and we can agree upon some place of deposit for our letters."

"Very well," said Pitou, — "such, for example, as the great hollow willow-tree, near the place where I found you in that swoon."

"Exactly! That is almost at the entrance of the farm, yet out of sight of the windows. It is then agreed that the letters shall be put in there?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle."

"Only, have a care that nobody sees!"

"Ask the gamekeepers at Longpré, at Taille Fontaine, at Montaigu, if they ever saw me; nevertheless, I have started up hares by the dozen. — But you, Mademoiselle Catherine, how will you manage to go after these famous letters?"

"I?" said Catherine, with a smile full of hope and determination, "I shall set myself at work to get well right away."

Pitou breathed the greatest of all possible sighs. At that moment the door opened, and Doctor Raynal appeared.

CHAPTER LIII.

PITOU AS DRESS-CAPTAIN.

Doctor Raynal's visit came very opportunely, to facilitate Pitou's departure.

The physician could not approach his patient, without perceiving the great change which had come over her since the evening before.

Catherine smiled upon the Doctor, and offered him her wrist.

"My dear Catherine," said he, "if it were not for the pleasure of touching your pretty hand, I should not even test your pulse. I wager it won't exceed seventy-five beats a minute."

"It 's true I 'm much better, Doctor, and your prescriptions have worked wonders."

"My prescriptions! *Hum–m–m!* You will understand, my child, that I ask nothing better than to be credited with all the honors of your convalescence; but, vain as I am, I must concede part of the credit to my medical student, Pitou."

Raising his eyes heavenward, he exclaimed: "Oh Nature, — powerful Ceres, mysterious Isis, — what secrets thou guardest, even from those who know how to question thee!"

Then, turning towards the door, he called out: "Now then, come in, you sober-visaged father, you restless-eyed mother, — come in, and see our dear invalid. She needs only one thing to complete the cure, — your love and your caresses."

At the Doctor's summons Father and Mother Billot hurried in, the father with a remnant of suspicion in his physiognomy, the mother's face all radiant with joy.

As they were going in, Pitou slipped out, after responding, with a knowing wink, to Catherine's farewell glance.

Let us now leave Catherine, — with Isidore's letter pressed against her heart, in place of having cold-water bandages about her head and mustard poultices on her feet, — let us leave Catherine, we say, to recover hope and life, under the caresses of her worthy parents, and follow Pitou, who has just accomplished, simply and unconsciously, one of the most difficult tasks imposed by Christianity on Christian souls, — forgetfulness of self, united with devotion to one's neighbor.

To say the brave fellow quitted Catherine with a joyous spirit, would be too much. We must be content to say that he went away with a satisfied heart. Although he did not stop to think of the greatness of his deed, he did feel — through the congratulations of that inward voice, which everybody carries about with him — that he had done a good and holy thing, from the human standpoint; though not perhaps from the standpoint of morality, which would certainly not have approved Catherine's intrigue with Isidore de Charny, — of a peasant-girl with a noble lord.

At the epoch of which we are speaking, *humanity* was one of the popular catchwords; and Pitou, who had often spoken this word, without quite knowing what it implied, now put his humanity into practice, though hardly knowing enough to call it by that name.

Had he not acted out of the genuine kindness of his heart, what he did for Catherine would have required unusual sharpness for its achievement.

From being the rival of Isidore de Charny, — a posi-

tion Pitou could not possibly have maintained, — he had become the confidant of Catherine. Instead of repulsing Pitou rudely, treating him like a brute, and putting him outside the door, as Catherine did on the return from his first trip to Paris, she now petted him, caressed him, and called him *thee* and *thou*.

As her confidant, he obtained a place in her regard which, as a rival, he could never have dreamed of holding, — without calculating that events must, sooner or later, necessitate his increasing participation in the intimate life and private sentiments of this beautiful peasant-girl.

In order to provide for a continuance of these friendly relations, Pitou began by carrying to Madame Colombe a billet, almost illegible, given him by Catherine, authorizing him to receive for her, and in her name, all letters which might come addressed to her.

To this written authority Pitou added Catherine's verbal promise, that on Saint Martin's Day she would give all the laborers at Pisseleu a treat of gingerbread and barley candy. Thanks to this authorization and this promise, — one of which satisfied the conscience, while the other gratified the business instincts of Mother Colombe, — she agreed to take from the post-packet, every morning, any letters which came for Catherine, and hold them at Pitou's disposal.

This point adjusted, and having nothing else to do in the *city*, — as Villers Cotterets was pretentiously styled, — Pitou took his homeward way.

Pitou's return to Haramont was a public event. His precipitate departure for the capital gave rise to a great many comments; for ever since the arrival from Paris, through one of Lafayette's aide-de-camps, of an order for the seizure of certain guns, kept in store at the Abbé

Fortier's, the Haramont citizens had not doubted Pitou's political importance.

Some declared that he had been summoned to Paris by Doctor Gilbert. Others thought he had been sent for by Lafayette. Others again — though, it must be acknowledged, these constituted the smallest number — thought he had been summoned by the King himself.

Although Pitou was ignorant of the rumors which were thus spread abroad during his absence, — rumors which added to his personal importance, however, — none the less did he set foot on his native heath with an air of such dignity, that everybody was greatly impressed therewith.

To be rightly estimated, men must be seen in their natural environment. At Fortier's seminary, Pitou was a pupil; at Billot's farm, he was a day-laborer; but at Haramont, he was a man, a citizen, the *Captain*. Without counting five or six louis which belonged to him personally, by virtue of his rank as Captain, it will be remembered that he had brought home twenty-five louis, generously bestowed by Gilbert, with a view to the equipment of the Haramont National Guard.

As soon as he reached home, and the drummer came to see him, Pitou ordered the lad to announce for the next Sunday, at noon, an official review, with arms and equipments, in the public square of the village. From this moment nobody doubted that Pitou had some communication to make, from the government to the Haramont Guards. Many came to chat with him, in order to learn this great secret in advance of their neighbors; but Pitou maintained a majestic silence as to public matters.

That evening, — for Pitou would no more allow his public affairs to distract him from his private duties, than he would allow his private affairs to distract him

from his public duties, — that evening he went to look after his hares, and present his compliments to Father Clouis; but this did not prevent him from calling on Master Dulauroy, the tailor, at seven o'clock next morning, — after leaving three rabbits and a hare at his own lodging, and asking Mother Colombe if there were any letters for Catherine.

There was not one; and this troubled Pitou, as he thought how disappointed the poor convalescent would be.

Pitou's visit to Monsieur Dulauroy was for the purpose of ascertaining if he would consent to undertake the job of clothing the Haramont National Guards, and what price he would charge for the same.

Master Dulauroy asked the usual questions about the height of the men, questions which Pitou answered by placing before his eyes the official list of thirty-three men, — officers, subalterns, and privates, — composing the active force of the Haramont Militia.

As all these men were known to Master Dulauroy, he could easily calculate their aggregate length and breadth; so, quill and pencil in hand, the tailor declared that he could not furnish thirty-three coats and thirty-three pairs of breeches, properly finished, for less than thirty-three louis; and that even at that price, Pitou must not expect entirely new cloth.

Pitou protested, declaring he had it from Lafayette's own mouth, that the General had clothed the three millions of men, composing the French Civic Guard, at the rate of twenty-five francs per man, or seventy-five millions for the whole.

Master Dulauroy replied, that with such an immense contract, what was lost in certain details might be retrieved in the grand result; but this was what *he* would

do, — and this was his last word, — he would uniform the Haramont Guards for twenty-two francs apiece; but there must be an advance payment, for he could not undertake such a job on credit.

Pitou carelessly drew a handful of gold from his pocket. He declared that though there was no difficulty about cash payments, he was limited as to price; and that if Master Dulauroy could not make thirty-three coats and thirty-three breeches for twenty-five golden louis, the captain must go to Master Bligny, Dulauroy's rival; although the preference had been given to Dulauroy, because he was the friend of Pitou's aunt.

Indeed, Pitou was not sorry to have Aunt Angelica learn, in this roundabout way, that he had a spadeful of gold; and he doubted not that, on that very evening, the tailor would report what he had seen, declaring that Pitou was as rich as Crœsus.

The threat of taking such an important order elsewhere, had its due effect. Master Dulauroy agreed to do as Pitou wished; and even acceded to Pitou's demand for a captain's suit for himself, to be made of new cloth, and finished in good shape, epaulets included. He was not particular about fine cloth, — he even liked coarse cloth better than fine, — but it must be new.

This occasioned a new debate, not shorter or less fiery than the first; but again Pitou was victorious, — thanks to that terrible threat of patronizing Master Bligny, if Master Dulauroy could not accept these terms.

The end of all this discussion was an agreement to furnish, by the next Saturday, thirty-one coats and thirty-one breeches for the privates, two coats and two breeches for the sergeant and lieutenant, and one coat and breeches for the captain, this last coat to be graced with epaulets.

In default of punctual delivery of the goods, the tailor would be held responsible for procuring the postponement of the ceremony of public confederation, — of Villers Cotterets and the other villages, — which was to take place in the chief town of the neighborhood, on the Sunday following that Saturday. This condition was accepted by the tailor, like the others.

By nine o'clock in the morning, the important bargain was concluded.

At half-past nine Pitou returned to Haramont, proudly anticipating the surprise which he had prepared for his fellow-citizens.

At eleven o'clock the drummer beat his call.

At noon the National Guard manœuvred under arms, with their usual precision, in the public square of the village.

After an hour of drill, which won for the brave guardsmen the praises of their chief, — and the cheers of the women, children, and old men, who looked upon this touching spectacle with the greatest interest, — Pitou summoned Sergeant Claude Tellier and Lieutenant Desiré Maniquet, and ordered them to call their men together, and invite them, in behalf of himself, in behalf of Doctor Gilbert, in behalf of General Lafayette, and in behalf of the King, to call upon Master Dulauroy, the tailor at Villers Cotterets, who had important communications for them all.

The drummer beat the call to order. The sergeant and lieutenant, who knew as little about it as those whom they addressed, transmitted the orders to the privates, in the exact words of their captain. Then the order to break ranks was pronounced by the ringing voice of Pitou himself.

Five minutes later the thirty-one brave privates of the

Haramont Guard, plus Sergeant Tellier and Lieutenant Desiré Maniquet, were hurrying along the road to Villers Cotterets.

That night the two fiddlers of Haramont gave the captain a serenade. The air was alive with crackers, gunshots, Roman candles, and pinwheels, and several voices — slightly inebriated, to be sure — called out at intervals: "Long life to Ange Pitou, the Father of the People!"

CHAPTER LIV.

IN WHICH THE ABBÉ FORTIER GIVES A NEW PROOF OF HIS ANTI-REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT.

THE following Sunday the inhabitants of Villers Cotterets were awakened by the drummer, enthusiastically beating his call to arms, at five o'clock in the morning.

In my opinion, nothing is more impertinent than this fashion of arousing people, the majority of whom — almost always, it is safe to say — would prefer to finish the night peacefully, and complete their seven hours of sleep, which, according to popular hygiene, every man needs, to keep himself in good health; but so it is in revolutionary epochs; and when a man lives in one of these periods of agitation and progress, he must philosophically reckon slumber among the sacrifices to be made for his country.

Satisfied or dissatisfied, Patriotic or Aristocratic, the inhabitants of Villers Cotterets were thus aroused on that Sunday, October 18, 1789, at five o'clock in the morning.

The ceremony was not to begin till ten, but five hours were none too long for the accomplishment of what yet remained to be done.

During the preceding ten days a large platform, or stage, had been erected in the middle of the square; but this stage, the rapid construction whereof attested the zeal of the carpenters, was but the skeleton of the edifice, — so to speak.

The structure was intended for a Patriot Altar; and, more than a fortnight before, the Abbé Fortier had been invited to come and celebrate Mass at that altar, on Sunday, October 18, instead of doing so in his church.

To make this stage worthy of its double purpose, religious and social, it was necessary to ask donations from the rich accumulations of the community; and it must be said that all had generously offered their possessions in aid of this grand solemnity, — one sending a carpet, another an altar-cloth, a third giving silk curtains, and a fourth lending a sacred picture; but as stability is not the strong point of the weather in the month of October, and as the barometer seldom points to *fair* during the reign of the Scorpion, nobody liked to expose his offering before the proper time, and each preferred to delay bringing forward his tribute till the feast-day arrived, and proved to be bright and pleasant.

The sun rose at six and a half o'clock, according to its custom at that period of the year, announcing, by the softness and warmth of its rays, one of those beautiful autumn days, which may well challenge comparison with the loveliest days of spring.

By nine o'clock the Patriot Altar was spread with a magnificent Aubusson carpet, draped with lace-edged linen, and surmounted by a picture representing John the Baptist preaching in the Wilderness; while it was sheltered by a canopy of gold-fringed velvet, from which hung magnificent brocade curtains.

The utensils necessary for the celebration of Mass would naturally be sent from the chapel, and everybody knew these would be all right.

Moreover, every citizen, as on Corpus Christi, decorated his doorway, or the front of his house, with tapestries

embroidered with flowers and human figures, or else with hangings twined with ivy.

All the young girls in Villers Cotterets and its vicinity — clad in white, wearing tricolored sashes, and carrying green branches — were to surround the Patriot Altar.

After Mass the men were to take the oath in support of the Constitution.

The Villers Cotterets National Guards, under arms since eight o'clock, awaited the coming of the military companies from the other villages, and fraternized with them as fast as they arrived.

It need scarcely be said that, among all these companies, the one expected with the most impatience was the Haramont Civic Guard, — it having been noised abroad that (thanks to the influence of Pitou and to the royal bounty) the thirty-three men composing that company, plus their captain Ange Pitou, would appear in new uniforms.

The shop of Master Dulauroy had not been empty all the week. Outside and inside there was a stream of inquisitive folks, anxious to see the ten workmen employed on this gigantic order, — an order unparalleled within the memory of the oldest inhabitant of Villers Cotterets.

The last uniform, the captain's, — for Pitou had insisted that he should not be served before the others, — the last uniform was ready for delivery, according to the agreement, on Saturday night, at fifty-nine minutes past eleven.

Equally according to agreement, Pitou counted out, on the nail, the twenty-five louis to Monsieur Dulauroy.

All this having made a great stir in the chief village of the canton, it is not astonishing, on the day appointed, that the Haramont Guards were so anxiously expected.

At precisely nine o'clock the sound of fife and drum was heard from the extremity of the Rue Largny. Great cries of joy and admiration were also heard, and from afar could be perceived the form of Pitou, on his white horse, — or, rather, on the white horse belonging to his lieutenant, Désiré Maniquet.

The Haramont Guard, as is not commonly the case with things long expected, did not disappoint expectation.

It may be remembered what a triumph these Haramontonians obtained when their uniforms were only thirty-three similar hats, and Pitou had nothing distinctive to mark his rank, except a plain dragoon's cap and sabre.

One can imagine what a martial display Pitou's thirty-three men now made, with their uniform coats and breeches, and what an air their chief put on, with his little cap cocked over his eye, his gorget on his breast, his catspaw-epaulets on his shoulders, and his sword in his hand.

There was one cry of admiration from the end of Rue Largny to the Place de la Fontaine.

Aunt Angelica could hardly bring herself to recognize her nephew; and she barely escaped being knocked down by Maniquet's white horse, in trying to look at Pitou under the animal's very nose.

Pitou made a majestic salute with his sword, and pronounced these words, in a tone to be heard twenty rods away: "Good-day, Madame Angelica."

Crushed by this respectful salutation, the ancient maiden took three steps backward, and exclaimed, lifting her eyes to Heaven: "Oh, the rascal! His honors have turned his head. He no longer knows his own aunt."

Pitou passed majestically along, without noticing this

apostrophe, and took his place at the foot of the Patriot Altar, — this place of honor being assigned to the Haramont Guards, because they were the only company completely uniformed.

There Pitou dismounted, and gave his horse into the care of an urchin, who received for his task six big sous from the munificent captain.

In the course of the next five minutes this fact was reported to Aunt Angelica, who cried: "The wretch! Is he a millionnaire?" Then she added, in a lower tone: "I was badly influenced when I quarreled with him. Aunts may inherit property from nephews!"

Neither exclamation nor reflection reached Pitou, who was simply in ecstasy; for among the girls belted with tricolored ribbons, and carrying green branches, he recognized Catherine.

She was still pale, for her disease was hardly vanquished; but she was more beautiful in her paleness than any other girl in the rosiest health.

Catherine was pale, but happy; for that very morning, thanks to Pitou, she had discovered a letter in the hollow tree.

As we have said, poor Pitou found time for everything. That morning, at seven, he found time to go to Mother Colombe's, after a letter. At quarter-past seven he placed that letter in the willow. At eight he was all dressed in his new uniform, at the head of his thirty-three followers.

He had scarcely seen Catherine since the day he left her on her bed at the farmhouse; and — we repeat it — when he now beheld her, so beautiful and so happy, it threw him into ecstasies.

She made him a sign to come to her. Pitou looked about, doubtful if this sign could be intended for himself. Catherine smiled again, and renewed the invitation. He

was not mistaken; so he replaced his sword in its scabbard, lifted his hat gallantly by one corner, and marched bare-headed toward the young girl; whereas, in the presence of Lafayette, Pitou would simply have touched his hat.

"Ah, Monsieur Pitou," said Catherine, "I hardly knew you. My goodness! How fine we look, in our new uniform." Then she added, in a whisper: "Thanks, thanks, my dear Pitou. How kind you are, and how much I love you."

As she spoke she took his hand, and pressed it between her own. A dizziness came over Pitou. His hat slipped from his relaxed hand, and fell to the ground; and possibly the poor lover would have fallen atop of his hat, if a great noise, accompanied by threatening tones, had not been heard from the direction of Rue Soissons.

Whatever the cause of this disturbance, Pitou profited by the incident to escape from his embarrassment. He withdrew his hand from Catherine's pressure, replaced his hat, and shouted "To arms!" as he ran to place himself at the head of his thirty-three men.

Let us see what caused this great tumult and these threatening cries.

It was well known that Abbé Fortier had been appointed to celebrate the Mass on this Patriot Altar, in honor of the local federation to be inaugurated, and that the sacred dishes, and other accessories of worship, — such as the crucifix, banners, candlesticks, — were to be transported from the church to this new altar, erected in the middle of the square.

The orders relating to this part of the ceremony had been given by the Mayor, Monsieur de Longpré.

It will be remembered that Monsieur de Longpré formerly had trouble with Abbé Fortier, when Pitou,

with Lafayette's warrant in his hand, made requisition for an armed force, in order to take possession of the guns unlawfully concealed by the priest. Acquainted well with the abbé's character, as was everybody else, Longpré knew him to be so self-willed as easily to lose his head, and irritable to the point of violence. He reasonably doubted whether the priest did not hold a grudge against the Mayor, on account of his interference in this old affair of the guns. So instead of calling personally upon Fortier, and conferring with him as to the respective duties of the civil and religious functionaries, the Mayor contented himself with sending to the worthy minister of God the programme of the festival, which was in part as follows:

ARTICLE IV.

Mass will be celebrated on the Patriot Altar, by the Abbé Fortier, commencing at ten o'clock in the morning.

ARTICLE V.

The sacred vessels, and other articles necessary for the service, under Abbé Fortier's care, will be taken from the church in Villers Cotterets, and placed on the Patriot Altar.

The Mayor's secretary had personally delivered this official programme to the priest, who glanced over it with a sneering air, and answered in a tone which corresponded with his looks: "Very well!"

By nine o'clock, as we have said, the Patriot Altar was all prepared, with its carpet, curtains, linen, and the picture of Saint John Preaching in the Wilderness. There were lacking only the candles, the crucifix, the tabernacle containing the consecrated wafer, and such other utensils as are essential to the divine service called the Sacrifice of the Mass.

At nine and a half o'clock these articles had not yet appeared.

The Mayor grew uneasy, and sent his secretary to the church, to inquire when they would bring these things over.

The secretary returned, saying that he had found the church doors locked.

Then he received orders to run after the beadle, as the beadle would naturally be the man to take charge of the articles to be moved; but he found the beadle with his leg stretched out on a hassock, and making faces like one possessed. The unfortunate mace-bearer had sprained his foot.

The secretary next received orders to go after the choristers. Both their bodies were out of kilter. By way of remedy, one had taken an emetic and the other a purgative. Both medicines were operating miraculously well, and the two sick men hoped to be out by the next day.

The Mayor began to smell a conspiracy. He sent his secretary to the priest's house. Behold, Abbé Fortier had been seized, that very morning, with an attack of the gout, and his sister feared lest it should mount as high as his stomach.

There was no longer any doubt in Mayor Longpré's mind. Not only was Fortier unwilling to say Mass on the Patriot Altar, but in putting the beadle and the choristers out of service, and locking all the doors of the church, he meant to prevent any other priest — if perchance one was present — from celebrating Mass in his stead.

The situation was grave. At that epoch it was not yet thought possible for the civil to be separated from the religious authorities, on any important occasion, or that

any festival could possibly be celebrated without the Mass; though a few years later, men went to the other extreme.

Of course all these trips of the secretary to and fro, did not take place without his uttering hints about the sexton's sprain, the choral purgative and emetic, and the priestly gout.

A deep murmur began to make itself heard among the populace. They even talked of breaking down the church doors, in order to get the sacred utensils and ornaments, and of bringing the priest by force to the Patriot Altar.

The Mayor was essentially a conciliatory man. He checked the first effervescent movements, and offered to go as an ambassador to treat with Abbé Fortier.

He therefore went to the Rue Soissons and knocked at the priest's door, which was as carefully bolted as the doors of the church. He knocked in vain, for the door remained shut.

Monsieur de Longpré then concluded that it was time to call for the intervention of an armed force; so he sent word to the quartermaster and the corporal of gendarmes. Both were in Grand Square, and hastened to obey the official summons, followed by an immense concourse of people.

Having neither ram nor catapult wherewith to force the door, a locksmith was sent for; but at the moment when the locksmith inserted his picklock, the door opened, and Fortier appeared on the threshold. He did not look like Coligny, when he said to his assassins: "My brothers, what wish you with me?" but rather like Calchas, "with his hair standing on end, and his eyes brilliant with gory light," as Racine says in Iphigenia.

"Back!" cried the priest, lifting his hand with a menacing gesture. "Back, ye heretics, ye renegades ye

Huguenots, ye backsliders! Back, Amalakites, Sodomites, Gomorrites! Leave the threshold of God's servant!"

There was a great murmur in the crowd, a murmur not in the priest's favor.

"Pardon me," said the Mayor, in a mild voice, into which he conveyed the most persuasive possible accent; "pardon me, we only wish to learn whether you will or will not celebrate Mass on our Patriot Altar."

"Whether I will say Mass on that altar?" cried the priest, rushing at once into one of those fits of holy anger to which he was so inclined. "Do you wish me to sanction revolt, rebellion, ingratitude? Do you expect me to pray God to curse virtue and bless sin? You do not expect it, Monsieur Mayor! You want to learn, yes or no, whether I will celebrate your sacrilegious Mass? Well, take my answer! — No, *no*, NO, — I will *not!*"

"Very well, Monsieur Fortier," replied the Mayor, "you are free, and no one can force you."

"Ah, it is indeed fortunate that I am free. It is indeed lucky that I am not to be compelled. — Indeed, you are too kind, Monsieur Mayor!"

Thus the Abbé replied, with a most insolent sneer, as he began to shut his door against the very noses of the authorities.

The door was about to present — as one might say in vulgar language — its wooden face to the stunned assemblage, when a man rushed out of the crowd, and, with one powerful effort, banged open the door, which was nearly shut, — thereby almost upsetting the priest, so vigorous was the attack.

This man was Billot, — Billot, pale with anger, his brows contracted and his teeth set.

It will be remembered that Billot was a philosopher.

In this quality he detested the priests, whom he called *smallcaps* and *loafers*.

He caused a profound silence. Everybody felt that something terrible was likely to happen between the two men.

Although compelled to use great force in holding the door open, Billot nevertheless spoke with a calm and almost gentle voice.

"Pardon me, Monsieur Mayor, but what did you say? You said — I beg to repeat it — you said, if Abbé Fortier did not wish to discharge the duties of his office, no one could compel him to do so?"

"Yes, about that!" stammered poor Monsieur de Longpré. "Yes, I said something like that!"

"Then you have advanced a great error, Monsieur Mayor; and, in our day, it is important such errors should not propagate themselves."

"Back, profane one! Back, impious man! Back, renegade! Back, heretic!" cried Abbé Fortier, addressing Billot.

"Hold your tongue," said Billot, "or, I give you fair warning, things will turn out very badly for you. I am not insulting you. I am here for discussion only. The Mayor believes that you cannot be forced to say Mass, and I say that you *can* be so compelled."

"A Manichæan! a Calvinist!" cried the priest.

"Silence!" said Billot. "What I say, I can prove."

"Silence, silence!" cried everybody.

"You hear, Monsieur Fortier," said Billot with uninterrupted calmness, "everybody is of my opinion. I may not preach like you, but it appears to me that I can say some interesting things, if anybody will listen."

The priest wanted to reply to this novel appeal, but the powerful voice of the multitude impressed him, in

spite of himself. "Speak, speak!" he said mockingly. "Let us hear what you have to say."

"You certainly *shall* hear!" said Billot.

"Go on! I'm listening!"

"Then you're doing well!" said Billot.

Throwing a side look at the priest, to see if he meant to keep still and listen, Billot continued: "I say that one thing is very simple, — whoever receives a salary is obliged, in exchange for that salary, to do the work for which it is paid."

"Ah!" said the priest, "I see what's coming."

"My friends," continued Billot, with the same easy voice, yet addressing himself to the two or three hundred spectators of the scene, "which do you prefer to hear, the anathemas of Monsieur Fortier, or my arguments?"

"Speak, Billot, speak! We are listening. Silence, Abbé Fortier, silence!"

This time Billot contented himself with a glance at Fortier, and then went on. "I say, that whoever touches a salary is obliged to do the work for which it is paid. For example, here is the Mayor's secretary. He is paid for doing certain writing for his Honor, for carrying his messages, for replying to certain letters which are addressed to him. His Honor sends him to you, Monsieur Abbé, to bring you a programme of this festival. Well, it would never enter his head to tell the Mayor that he would rather not take this programme to Monsieur Fortier! Am I not right, Monsieur Secretary, — that such a notion would not occur to you?"

"Certainly it would n't! My faith, no!" responded the secretary, ingenuously.

"Do you hear, Monsieur Abbé?" asked Billot.

"Blasphemer!" cried the priest.

"Silence!" cried the audience.

Billot went on: "Here's the quartermaster of the police, who is paid to maintain good order, where good order is endangered. When his Honor the Mayor thought, just now, that you were likely to disturb the peace, and summoned the quartermaster to his aid, did that officer think of replying: 'Execute the order if you will, Monsieur Mayor, but don't expect me to execute it'? Did you even think of responding in such a way, Monsieur Quartermaster?"

"My faith, no!" replied the gendarme. "It was my duty to come, and I came."

"You hear, Monsieur Fortier?" said Billot.

The priest ground his teeth.

"Wait!" continued Billot. "Here is an honest man, a locksmith. Just now the Mayor sent for him to come and open your door. The locksmith did not think of replying that he did not wish to open Fortier's door. Am I not right, Picard, in saying that idea did not occur to you?"

"To be sure," replied the locksmith. "I took my picks, and here I am. When each one does his duty, the cows are well cared for."

"You hear, Monsieur Abbé?" said Billot.

The priest tried to interrupt, but the farmer stopped him with a gesture.

"Tell me now, how comes it that you, who are appointed to set a good example, — how comes it that you alone are excused, when everybody else is held fast to his duty?"

"Bravo, Billot! bravo!" cried the audience, with one voice.

"Not only do you shirk your duty, but you set an example of disorder."

"Oh!" said the priest, perceiving that it was necessary for him to defend himself, "the Church is independent. The Church obeys nobody, and is responsible only to herself!"

"There 's just the mischief of it," said Billot. "You set up another power within the country, a separate body within the state. You are either French or foreign; either you are a citizen, or you are not a citizen. If you are Prussian, English, or Austrian, — if you get your pay from Pitt of England, from Cobourg, or from Kaunitz of Austria, then obey the directions of Pitt, Cobourg, or Kaunitz; but if you are a Frenchman, if you are a citizen, if the nation pays your salary, then obey the nation."

"Yes, yes!" cried three hundred voices.

"Therefore," said Billot, with a scowl on his face, and his eye full of lightning, laying his strong hand on the priest's shoulder, "therefore, thou priest, in the name of the nation, I summon thee to fulfil thy mission of peace, to appeal for the favors of Heaven, the good bounty of Providence, the mercy of the Lord, to fall on all thy fellow-citizens and on thy country! Come on!"

"Bravo, Billot! Long live Billot!" shouted the crowd. "To the altar with the priest! To the altar!"

Encouraged by these acclamations, with his vigorous arm the farmer dragged the priest from the sheltering arch of his great doorway, — perhaps the first priest in France who openly took his stand in favor of a counter-revolution.

The Abbé Fortier understood that resistance was no longer possible; so he said: "Very well, make a martyr of me! I call for martyrdom! I pray for martyrdom! I demand martyrdom." Then he intoned, in a full

voice, the Psalm, *Libera nos, Domine!* (Deliver us, oh Lord!)

This was the singular procession which advanced towards the public square, accompanied by the cries and clamors whose noise reached Pitou, when he was ready to faint under Catherine's thanks and tender words, added to the pressure of her hand.

CHAPTER LV.

THE DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

Pitou, to whose mind this noise recalled the Parisian riots, which he had more than once witnessed, — believing that he saw a band of ruffians approaching, believing that he should be called upon to defend some new Flesselles, some new Foulon, some new Berthier, — gave the order "To arms!" and put himself at the head of his thirty-three men.

Then the crowd divided, and he saw advancing the Abbé Fortier, dragged along by Billot, and needing only a palm-branch to make him like the ancient Christians, when they were forced into the arena of the Coliseum.

A natural feeling impelled him to the support of his old teacher, of whose offence he was as yet ignorant.

"Oh Monsieur Billot!" he cried, throwing himself in front of the farmer.

"Oh father!" cried Catherine, with a movement so exactly like Pitou's, that one might believe they had been trained by the same scene-manager.

It only required a glance from Billot, to check Pitou on one side, and Catherine on the other. There were both the eagle and the lion in that man, who represented the incarnation of the popular uprising.

At the foot of the staging he loosed his hold upon the priest, and said, pointing to the platform with his finger: "There is the Patriot Altar, at which thou hast disdained to officiate, but which I now declare thee unworthy to

serve. To ascend these sacred steps the heart should be filled with three sentiments — desire for liberty, devotion to country, love of humanity. Priest! dost thou desire the enfranchisement of the world? Priest! art thou devoted to thy country? Priest! lovest thou thy neighbor as thyself? Then ascend boldly to the altar, and call upon God! but if thou dost not feel thyself to be a leader among us, as a citizen, — chief among us, because best serving the common weal, — then yield thy place to one more worthy, and take thyself hence! — Go thy way! Disappear!"

"Wretch!" exclaimed the priest, as he retired, threatening Billot with his fist. "Thou dost not know against whom thou declarest war!"

"Yes, I do know!" said Billot. "I declare war against wolves, foxes, serpents, — against whatsoever stings, whatsoever bites, whatsoever wounds in the dark. Well," he added, smiting his large breast with a powerful gesture of both hands, "stab, bite, sting! Here I am!"

There followed a moment of silence. The crowd opened to let the priest escape, and then closed up again, remaining motionless with admiration, in the presence of Billot's vigorous nature, which offered itself as a target for the shafts of that terrible power, by which, at that epoch, half the world was still enslaved, and which was called the Clergy, or the Church. There was no longer any mayor, no longer a deputy-mayor, no longer a municipal council; there was only Billot!

Monsieur de Longpré drew near, saying: "But with all this, Monsieur Billot, we have still no priest."

"And what then?"

"Having no curate, we can have no Mass."

"Pity about that!" said Billot, who, since his boyhood's first and only communion, had but twice set foot

in a church, — on the day of his own marriage, and the day of his daughter's baptism.

"I do not call it a misfortune," replied the Mayor, who held, with good reason, that it was not best to cross Billot's grain, "but what can we have in place of the Mass?"

"In place of the Mass?" cried Billot, borne along by a wave of genuine inspiration. "I 'll tell you. Ascend with me to this Patriot Altar, Monsieur Mayor! — ascend with me, Pitou! — you on my right hand, and you on my left, — so! What we will have in place of the Mass, — listen, all of you! — is the Declaration of Human Rights, which is the Creed of Liberty, the Evangel of the Future."

There was a simultaneous clapping of hands. All these people, so recently emancipated, — barely unchained, — were hungry for some knowledge of the rights won for them, which they were some day to enjoy. They were more thirsty for that gospel, than for what Abbé Fortier called the Word Celestial.

Standing between the Mayor, who represented legal power, and Pitou, who represented military force, Billot stretched forth his hand. Speaking from his heart and memory, — for, it will be remembered, the worthy farmer knew not how to read, — he delivered his speech in a resounding voice, while the people listened, standing with uncovered heads. His speech took the form of a sermon on a series of texts, — texts furnished by the famous Declaration of Human Rights, written perhaps by Thomas Paine, who so ably defended it, — perhaps by Dumont, the friend and coadjutor of Mirabeau, — and adopted, while as yet the Constitution was in embryo, by the National Assembly, on August 18, 1789, two months before this confederation at Villers Cotterets.

As if the printed page were before him, Billot repeated each section of this remarkable document, often deducing certain inferences therefrom.

DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

Article One.

Men are born, and should live, with free and equal rights. Social distinctions should have no other foundation than the common welfare.

Article Two.

The object of political association should be the preservation of natural and inalienable human rights. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.

These words, *resistance to oppression*, were spoken by Billot as a man who had seen the walls of the Bastille tumble before his very eyes, and knew that nothing could resist the strength of the people, when they put forth that strength.

Then arose one of those murmurs which, coming from a multitude of people, sound like distant thunder, while Billot continued ·

Article Three.

The principle of all government resides primarily in the Nation. No corporation, no individual, can rightfully exercise any authority which does not emanate directly from the Nation.

This last phrase so vividly recalled what had just been said in the discussion between Billot and the priest, — wherein Billot had invoked this very principle, — that the words could not pass by unnoticed; and the farmer's recitation of the lines was therefore interrupted by cheers

and plaudits, which Billot allowed to die away before he resumed his address.

Article Four.

Liberty consists in the right to do anything which does not injure others. The exercise of any man's natural rights is therefore only limited by the restraints necessary to secure to other members of society their enjoyment of the same rights, similarly assured to them; and these limits should be fixed only by law.

This article, though so fundamental, was somewhat too abstract for the simple folks who listened to it; and so it was received more coldly than the others.

Article Five.

The law has only the right to condemn such actions as are injurious to society. Anything not prohibited by law cannot be rightfully forbidden; and no one can lawfully be compelled to do what is not ordained by law.

"That is to say," said a voice from the crowd, "if the law no longer ordains the *corvée*, or enforced public labor, and abolishes ecclesiastical tithes, then the priests have no longer any right to take their tithes from my fields, nor the King to force me to do public work without pay, on the highways, in the forests, or elsewhere."

"Precisely," said Billot, replying to his questioner; "and for the present and future we are forever exempt from these shameful extortions."

"In that case," said the questioner, "Long live the Law!" and the whole audience repeated in chorus: "Long live the Law!"

Here Billot lifted his finger solemnly: "Listen well to this, — friends, brothers, citizens, men!" and as he went

on with the next article, he raised his voice higher and higher, so that not a syllable of it should be lost:

Article Six.

Law is the expression of the will of the community. All Frenchmen have the right to participate, personally, or by their representatives, in the establishment of law, which must be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes. All citizens, being equal before the law, are equally admissible to all dignities, places, and offices, *according to their individual capacities*, and without other distinctions than those which arise from *virtues* and *talent*.

This Sixth Article roused universal applause; so Billot passed at once to the next:

Article Seven.

No man can be rightfully indicted, arrested, or imprisoned, except in cases determined by law, and in accordance with prescribed forms. All those who incite, expedite, or execute unlawful commands, or cause them to be executed, must be punished; but every citizen, summoned or seized in the name of the law, should instantly obey, and not render himself culpable by resistance.

Article Eight.

The law should ordain only such penalties as are strictly necessary; and no one should be punished, except in accordance with a law ordained and promulgated prior to the offence, and legally applied.

Article Nine.

Every man being presumably innocent, until he is declared guilty, if his detention is judged indispensable, all severity not found necessary for the custody of his person, should be severely forbidden by law.

Article Ten.

No man should be molested on account of his opinions, even in religion, provided their manifestation does not disturb the order established by law.

Article Eleven.

The free expression of thoughts and opinions is one of the most precious human rights. Every citizen may therefore speak, write, and print freely; although he must be held responsible for any abuse of this liberty, in cases determined by law.

Article Twelve.

A guaranty of the rights of men and citizens requires public force. This force is instituted for the benefit of all, and not for the special use of those to whom its duties are confided.

Article Thirteen.

For the support of public authority, and the defrayal of government expenses, a common contribution is indispensable; but it should be equally divided among all citizens, in proportion to their means.

Article Fourteen.

All citizens have the right to determine, either personally or by their representatives, the necessity of any public contribution, to discuss it freely, to learn how it is used, and to determine its proportional assessment, its collection, and its duration.

Article Fifteen.

Society has the right to demand of every public agent an account of his administration.

Article Sixteen.

Society in which the guaranty of rights is not assured, and the distribution of power is undefined, has no proper Constitution.

Article Seventeen.

The right to property being inviolable and sacred, no one should be deprived of it, except when it is evidently exacted by public necessity, legally determined, and under the condition of fair preliminary indemnity.

"Now," said Billot, "here is the application of these principles, as adopted by the National Assembly. Hearken, my brothers! Hearken, fellow-citizens! Hearken, ye men of France, set free by this Declaration of Human Rights, — of *your* rights!"

"Hush! Silence! Hear!" shouted at least twenty voices together.

Billot went on, with a threatening accent, expressing his hatred of tyranny:

The National Assembly, wishing to establish the French Constitution on the principles recognized in this Declaration, abolishes irrevocably all institutions which wound liberty and equality.

Henceforth there shall be neither nobility nor peerage, neither hereditary distinctions nor distinctions of rank, neither feudal government nor hereditary judgeships, nor any of the titles, attributes, or prerogatives derived therefrom, no orders of knighthood, nor any corporations or decorations which may demand proofs of nobility, or which presuppose distinctions of birth; nor shall there be any superiority except that belonging to public officers in the exercise of their duties.

No public office shall henceforth be salable or hereditary. There shall not be for a part of the nation, nor for an individual thereof, any privilege or exemption not belonging equally to all the French people.

There shall be no restrictive guilds, no professional corporations, no monopolies of the arts and trades.

Finally, the law recognizes the validity, neither of religious vows, nor of any other pledges contrary to natural human rights and the Constitution.

Billot finished his address, which had been listened to in religious silence.

For the first time, and with surprise, the people heard their rights proclaimed in open day, in the light of the sun, and in the presence of their Lord, to whom they had long prayed for such a charter of natural rights, which they had now obtained only after cycles of slavery, misery, and suffering.

For the first time humanity, real manhood, on which the edifice of the monarchy — with the peerage on the right, and the clergy on the left — had been pressing for six hundred years, — for the first time the laborer, the artisan, the mechanic, could recognize his own strength, could appreciate his own value, could calculate his rightful position on the earth, could measure the shadow which he cast in the sunshine; and do all this, not by reason of the good pleasure of some master, who claimed an inborn right to rule, but at the word of one of his own equals.

After the last lines, which he repeated: "The law recognizes the validity neither of religious vows, nor of any other pledges contrary to natural human rights and the Constitution," Billot lifted up his voice in words so new as to seem almost wrong: "Long live the Nation!" When he thus spoke he extended his two arms, and drew to his breast, in one fraternal embrace, the Mayor's scarf and Pitou's epaulets. Though the Mayor ruled in a very small community, and Pitou was chief only of a handful of peasants, — despite the smallness of the things represented, — the principle was none the less grand, and every mouth repeated the shout, "Long live the Nation!"

All arms opened and closed in a general embrace. There was a sublime fusion of all hearts into one general

heart, — an absorption of all interests into one common devotion.

It was such a scene as Gilbert described to the Queen three months later, — in a conversation already recorded in this narrative, — a scene which she could not at all understand.

Billot came down from the Patriot Altar amidst the joyous acclamations of the whole population.

The musicians of Villers Cotterets, assisted by the musicians from the neighboring villages, soon began to play that melody of fraternal reunion, so familiarly used at weddings and baptisms :

Where can one better be
Than in his family ?

Dating from that era France became one grand national family. Religious hatreds were extinguished. Provincial prejudices were annihilated. What is one day to come to pass for all the world, then began for France. Geographical distinctions were erased. No more mountains, no more rivers, no more obstacles of any sort, intervened between man and man. There was one language, one country, one heart.

Hearing this rustic melody, wherewith the nation had formerly welcomed Henry the Fourth, and with which, even in our day, Liberty is still saluted, — the crowd began to wreathe themselves into that ancient dance from Provence, called the Farandole. In an instant they formed an endless chain, which rolled itself into living rings about the centre, and then strung itself out into the streets which led away from the square.

Then they set up tables in front of their doors. Poor or rich, every one brought his dish of food, his pot of cider, his mug of beer, his bottle of wine, or his jug of

water; and the whole population blessed God, while they shared this love-feast, — this *agapé*, — which might well derive its name from the assemblages of the apostolic Christians. Six thousand citizens thus received the elements at the same table, as it were, — the holy table of fraternity, the Eucharist of Humanity.

Billot was the hero of the hour; but he shared his honors generously with the Mayor and Pitou.

It is needless to say that in the dance Pitou managed to give his hand to Catherine, — needless to say that he found a place near her at the table.

She was unhappy, poor child. The joy of the morning had vanished, as the rosy and smiling rays of the dawn disappear beneath the storm-clouds of midday.

In his struggle with Fortier, in his speech over the Declaration of Human Rights, her father had bidden defiance to the Clergy and the Nobility, — a defiance the more terrible, coming from so humble a quarter.

She thought of Isidore, who was no longer anything, — that is, was nothing socially more than other men.

It was not his title, not his rank, not his wealth, which she regretted, for she would have loved Isidore as a simple peasant; but it seemed to her that the world was violent, unjust, brutal towards this gentle youth. It seemed to her as if her father, by wresting from Isidore his titles and privileges, was separating him from her forever, instead of drawing him towards her.

As to the Mass, nobody said anything more about it. They almost pardoned the priest's anti-Revolutionary outburst; although he perceived the very next day, by an almost empty class-room, that his refusal to officiate at the Altar of Liberty had deprived him of his popularity with the Patriots of Villers Cotterets.

CHAPTER LVI.

BENEATH THE WINDOW.

THE ceremony we have just described was a local federation; and the purpose of such local reunions was to more closely knit together all the communities in France.

Such celebrations were but the preludes, however, of a grander reunion, which was to take place in Paris, on July 14, 1790.

At these partial and local reunions the citizens looked about them, to decide upon the deputies who should be sent to this general federation.

The parts sustained by Billot and Pitou on Sunday, October 18, commended them naturally to the suffrages of their fellow-citizens, for the great day which was to come.

Meanwhile people resumed their ordinary routine of life, out of which they had temporarily emerged, through the wrench which this memorable event had given to their calm provincial habits.

When we speak of the usual stagnation of provincial habits, we do not mean to say that in the country, less than elsewhere, the course of life is cheered by joy or clouded by sorrow. There is not a streamlet, however small, — from that which bathes the grass of the poor peasant's little orchard, to the majestic river which descends from the Alps as from a throne, to throw itself like a conqueror into the sea, — but has along its banks (modest or proud, strewn with daisies or dotted with villages) its intervals of sunshine and shadow.

If we have any doubt about this, after seeing the trouble in the Tuileries, which we have unveiled, then the farm of Father Billot — whereto also we lead our readers — may furnish the needed example.

On the surface, however, everything appears calm and almost jubilant. At about five in the morning the great gate swings open, towards the field extending away to the forest, which in summer sways like a green curtain, and in winter stands like a dark shroud.

The sower goeth forth to sow, bearing on his back his bag, filled with wheat mingled with wholesome ashes. The laborer goeth forth to find, awaiting him in the field, the plow which overnight he left standing, at the end of the furrow. The herdswoman leads forth her lowing troop, guided by the majestic and imperious bull, and followed by the cows and the heifers, among whom marches the favorite cow, recognizable by the clear-toned bell which hangs about her neck.

Behind them all, mounted on his vigorous Norman gelding, trotting and ambling along, comes Billot, — the master, the heart, the life, the soul of this world in miniature, this epitome of a nation.

A disinterested observer would remark nothing particular in his demeanor. From beneath his dark brows his eye looks searchingly about, and his ear is attentive to every sound within the radius of his view. During this investigation, by eye and ear, he is like a hunter who catches the scent of game, is tracing its flight, and dares not lift his eyes from the earth.

In all this the indifferent spectator may see only the natural action of the landed proprietor, assuring himself that the day is fine, and wondering if, during the night, the wolves have invaded his sheepfold, the wild boars have rooted up his potatoes, or the rabbits have inter-

fered with his clover, sallying forth from the forest, the asylum wherein they can be shot only by the princely bullets of the Duc d'Orleans or his gamekeepers; but to any one who can look into the heart of the sturdy farmer, each of his movements, his gestures, and glances will bear a graver interpretation.

Why is he gazing into the mist of the morning? To see whether some prowler cometh nigh his farm, or is furtively stealing away from it.

Why is he so intently listening? To ascertain if some mysterious signal is not sent from Catherine's chamber to the clustering willows along the roadside, or to the ditches which divide the forest from the plain.

What does his penetrating glance ask of the soil? He looks to see if perchance it preserves the mark of a foot-step, whose lightness and size denounce it as aristocratic.

As to Catherine, as we have said, although her father's face is softened towards her, she none the less feels the paternal distrust which encompasses her, like the shadowing wings of some watchful angel; and this makes her wonder, during the long nights of winter, so solitary and anxious, whether she would prefer to have Isidore return to Boursonnes, or remain far away.

As for Madame Billot, she has resumed her vegetative life. Her husband having returned, and her daughter being restored to health, the mother sees nothing beyond this limited horizon; and it would take a sharper insight than hers to find the suspicion at the bottom of her husband's mind, or the anguish in the depths of her daughter's heart.

Having enjoyed his military triumph, with a pride not unmixed with sadness, Pitou has fallen back into his ordinary condition of mild and benevolent melancholy.

With his customary regularity he daily visits Mother

Colombe. If there is no letter for Catherine, he returns mournfully to Haramont; because, on the day when she gets no letter from Isidore, she has no occasion to think of the fellow who brings it to her. If, on the contrary, there is a letter, he deposits it religiously in the willow; yet he often returns home more sorrowfully than on those days when there are no letters, because Catherine will only think of him on the rebound, — because that fine gentleman (who may be deprived of his title by the Assembly, and by the Declaration of Human Rights, but cannot be dispossessed of his grace and elegance) is the connecting link, through whom Pitou has received his life's most painful experiences.

Nevertheless, as may be easily understood, Pitou was no purely passive messenger. If he was dumb, he was not blind. Apart from Catherine's catechism about Turin and Sardinia, which revealed the goal of Isidore's journey, Pitou learned, from the postmarks on the letters, that the young gentleman was in the capital of Piedmont. One fine day the postmark showed the word *Lyons* in place of *Turin;* and two days later, — that is, on December 25, a letter arrived which bore the name *Paris,* instead of *Lyons.*

Without any great keenness, Pitou comprehended that Isidore de Charny had left Italy and returned to France.

Once in the capital, it would evidently not be long before he quitted Paris for Boursonnes.

Pitou's heart was pained. Although devotion was the fixed purpose of his life, his heart was not therefore insensible to the different emotions which assailed it.

On the day when the letter came which was dated at Paris, he resolved, by way of pretext, to go and place his snares in the Bruyère-aux-Loups, where he had effectually operated in former days.

As the Pisseleu Farm was situated exactly on the road between Haramont and that part of the forest called Bruyère-aux-Loups, it is not surprising that Pitou stopped at the farm on his way, choosing for his visit the hour when Billot was likely to be riding through the meadows, about dinner-time.

It was Pitou's custom to cut across the fields, take the highway which runs from Villers Cotterets to Paris, follow along the broad road to the Noue Fields, and thence to follow the ravine till he reached Pisseleu.

Then he would walk around the walls enclosing the farm, pass by the sheepfolds and stables, and at last come to the great gate, on the other side of which rose the dwelling-house of the inmates.

This time he followed his wonted route.

When he reached the gate he looked about him, after Billot's fashion, and saw Catherine at her chamber window.

She seemed to be waiting for some one. Without being fixed on any particular spot, her gaze ran vaguely up and down the part of the forest line comprised between the road from Villers Cotterets to Ferté Milon, and that from Villers Cotterets to Boursonnes.

Not wishing to surprise Catherine, he placed himself in such a position, within the range of her inquiring glance, that soon his presence arrested her eye.

She smiled upon him. For Catherine, Pitou was only a friend; and yet he had become more than a friend, for he was her confidant.

"So it 's you, my dear Pitou! What good wind blows you here?"

Pitou showed her his snare strings, rolled about his arm, and said: "I had a notion of getting a couple of rabbits for you to eat, tender and well-flavored; and as

the best ones are to be found on Bruyère-aux-Loups, because of the thyme which grows there in profusion, I started very early, so as to come round this way, and see how you were getting along."

Catherine began to smile at this attention on Pitou's part; but after having thus responded to the first portion of his speech, she replied to the second half of it in these words: "You want news of my health? You are very good, dear Pitou. Thanks to the pains which you took for me when I was sick, and which you have continued during my convalescence, I am nearly well."

"*Nearly* well?" repeated Pitou, with a sigh. "I wish, with all my heart, that you were entirely well."

Catherine blushed, sighed in her turn, and grasped Pitou's hand, as if she had something very important to communicate; but thinking better of it, perhaps, she released his hand, and took several steps across the room, as if searching for her handkerchief. Having found it, she wiped her brow, which was wet with perspiration, albeit the day was one of the coldest of the year.

None of these movements escaped Pitou's keen regard.

"You have something to tell me, Mademoiselle Catherine?" he asked.

"Me? — Oh, no, — nothing! — You deceive yourself," replied the girl, in an altered tone.

Pitou made another effort. "You understand, Mademoiselle, if you need me, nothing must stand in your way —"

Catherine reflected, or rather hesitated, for an instant.

"My dear Pitou, you have proved that I can count upon you, when there is any occasion, and I am very grateful; but now, for a second time, I can only *thank* you for your offer."

Presently she added, in a lower voice: "It will be

useless for you to go to the post for me this week. I shall have no letters for several days."

Pitou was about to tell her what he thought, yet he wished to see how far her trust in him would extend; but she limited her statement to what she had just said, and her only purpose seemed to be, to save Pitou a needless walk every morning.

In his eyes, however, her words seemed to have a hidden meaning.

There was no reason why Isidore should not write, simply because he had returned to Paris. If Isidore no longer wrote to Catherine, it was because he expected to see her.

Who should assure Pitou that this Paris letter, which he had placed in the hollow tree that very morning, did not announce to Catherine her lover's immediate return? Who dare say that her gaze — which appeared lost in space, till his presence drew it towards himself — was not directed towards the line of the forest, for some sign which would indicate to the young girl that her lover was near at hand.

Pitou waited, to give Catherine time to debate within herself whether she had any further confidences for his ear. Then, seeing that she maintained an obstinate silence, he said: "Have you not observed the change which has come over your father?"

The girl trembled, and answered his question with another: "Ah! Have you also noticed something?"

"Mademoiselle Catherine," said he, mournfully shaking his head, "a moment will come, as sure as fate, when he who has caused this change will have a hard reckoning with your father, — let me tell you that! — though as to time and place, I know nothing. Do you understand?"

Catherine grew pallid, but all the same she looked

sharply at Pitou. "Why do you say *he* instead of *she?* It is perhaps a woman, and not a man, who must suffer from my father's smothered wrath."

"You frighten me, my dear Mademoiselle! Have *you* any reason to fear?"

"My friend," ruefully said the girl, "I have to fear what any girl must fear from an angry father, when she has forgotten her rank, and loves above her station."

"Mademoiselle," said Pitou, venturing to give his advice, "it seems to me that in your place —" He paused.

"It seems to you that in my place —" repeated Catherine.

"Well, it seems to me that in your place — But no! You almost died when he was simply absent. If you had to give him up altogether, you would die outright; and I do not want you to die. I would rather see you sick and sorry, than to see you laid down there, at the end of the valley. — Ah, Catherine, this is all very wretched!"

"Hush!" said she. "Let us talk of something else, or not talk at all. There's father!"

Pitou looked in the direction of Catherine's glance, and saw the farmer advancing on horseback, at a smart trot.

Perceiving a man near Catherine's window, the farmer stopped; but, seeing with whom he had to deal, he presently rode on.

Pitou stepped towards him, hat in hand, smiling as he did so.

"Ah, is it thou, Pitou? Comest thou after a dinner, my boy?"

"No, Monsieur Billot! I should n't think of doing such a thing; but —"

At that moment he noted an encouraging look on Catherine's face.

"But what?" asked Billot.

"Well, if I was invited, I should accept."

"Very well," said the farmer, "I invite you."

"Then I accept," rejoined Pitou.

The farmer touched the horse with his spur, and rode under the porch into the carriage-house.

Pitou turned towards Catherine. "Is that what you wished to speak about?" he asked.

"Yes. He is gloomier to-day than he ever has been before."

Then she added to herself: "Oh, my God! does he know?"

"What, Mademoiselle?" asked Pitou, who overheard Catherine, though she spoke so low.

"Nothing!" said she, withdrawing her head into the chamber, and closing the window.

CHAPTER LVII.

FATHER CLOUÏS REAPPEARS ON THE SCENE.

CATHERINE was not mistaken. In spite of the affable reception he had accorded Pitou, her father was gloomier than ever.

He shook Pitou's hand, and Pitou noticed that the farmer's hand was cold and damp. According to her custom, his daughter offered him her pale and cold cheek, but he only brushed her forehead with his lips.

As to Mother Billot, when she saw her husband enter the room, she rose, as was her custom, thus expressing both her respect for him, and a sense of her own inferiority; but the farmer did not pay her the least attention.

"Is dinner ready?" he asked.

"Yes, goodman," replied Mother Billot.

"Then, let us sit down," said he, "for I have lots of things to do before night."

They went into the small, family eating-room, which overlooked the courtyard, so that nobody from outside could enter the kitchen without passing by the window, whereby this room was lighted.

A plate was added for Pitou, who was seated between the two women, facing the farmer, and with his back to the window.

Preoccupied as Pitou was, he had with him an organ over which his mental disturbance had little influence, — namely, his stomach. The result was that Billot, notwithstanding his clear-sightedness, could detect nothing

in his guest but evident satisfaction with an excellent cabbage soup, and with the platter of beef and bacon which followed.

Nevertheless, Billot wished to ascertain if it was chance or design which brought Pitou to the farm; so while they were taking away the beef and bacon, to give place to a quarter of roasted lamb, — a dish which Pitou beheld with obvious pleasure, — the farmer unmasked his batteries, and questioned Pitou directly.

"My dear Pitou, as thou knowest, thou art always welcome at the farm; but might one ask what draws thee into these parts to-day?"

Pitou smiled, and looked about him, to make sure there were no indiscreet observers or telltale ears, and then pulled up the right sleeve of his blouse, with his left hand.

"There, Father Billot," he said, showing some twenty snares of wire, wound around his arm like a bracelet.

"Ah ha!" said Father Billot. "Hast thou depopulated the warrens of Longpré and Taille Fontaine, that thou comest trapping hither?"

"Not so," said Pitou, naïvely; "but I 've done business with those rascally rabbits over there so long, that they recognize my snares, and give them the go-by; so I thought I 'd speak a couple of words to-night to Father Lajeunesse's rabbits, who are less sly and more delicate, through constantly feeding on heather and thyme."

"Pest! I knew not thou wast such an epicure, Master Pitou."

"Oh, I 'm not dainty for my own sake," said Pitou, "but for Mademoiselle Catherine's. As she has been ill, she needs good meat."

"Yes," said Billot, interrupting Pitou, "thou art right; for thou seest, she has no longer any appetite."

As he spoke he pointed to Catherine's clean plate; for since eating a few spoonfuls of soup, she had touched neither the beef nor the bacon.

"I have no appetite, father," said Catherine, blushing at this sudden remark, "for I had just eaten a great bowl of bread and milk, when Monsieur Pitou passed near my window, and I called to him."

"I do not seek to know the cause of thy loss of appetite," said Billot, "I only state the fact." Then, glancing through the window into the courtyard, he rose, saying: "Ah, there 's somebody after me!"

Pitou felt Catherine's foot treading on his own, under the table. He turned towards her, and saw that she was pale as death, and trying to make him look towards the courtyard.

His glance followed Catherine's, and he recognized his old comrade, Father Clouïs, who passed in front of the window, with Billot's double-barrelled gun on his shoulder.

The farmer's gun was distinguishable from others, by having silver rings and trigger-guard.

"Ah!" said Pitou, who saw nothing alarming in all this, "it 's Father Clouïs. He 's bringing home your gun, Monsieur Billot."

"Yes," said Billot, reseating himself, "and he 'll dine with us, if he has n't dined already. — Wife, open the door for Father Clouïs."

Mother Billot arose, and went to open the door; while Pitou, his eyes fixed on Catherine, was wondering how there could be, in what was taking place, anything to occasion her paleness.

Father Clouïs entered. On his shoulder he carried the farmer's gun; and in the same hand he carried a hare, which he had evidently shot with this gun.

It will be remembered that Father Clouïs had received, from his Grace of Orleans, permission to kill one rabbit and one hare, on alternate days. This, it appeared, was hare-day.

With his unoccupied hand he doffed a sort of fur cap which he habitually wore, but of which there was little left beyond the skin, so constantly was it torn by the brakes, through which Father Clouïs scrambled; for he was nearly as insensible to thorns as a wild boar.

"Monsieur Billot, and all the company," said he, "I have the honor of saluting you."

"Good-day, Papa Clouïs," said Billot. "Well, I see you 're a man of your word. Thanks!"

"Oh, what 's agreed 's agreed, Monsieur Billot. You met me this morning, and you said to me, like this: 'Father Clouïs, you 're such a good shot, that if you 'll sort me out a dozen balls, of the calibre of my gun, you 'll do me a favor.' — To which I answered: 'When do you want 'em, Monsieur Billot?' — You said: 'This afternoon, without fail.' — Then I said: 'That 's all right! You shall have 'em.' And here they be."

"Thanks again, Father Clouïs," said Billot. "You 'll dine with us, won't you?"

"Oh, you 're very kind, Father Billot, but really, I don't need anything."

Father Clouïs believed that civility required him to say he was not tired, whenever he was asked to sit down, and that he was not hungry, whenever he was invited to eat.

Billot understood him, and said: "Never mind, draw up to the table. Here 's both food and drink. If you can't eat, you can drink."

Meantime Mother Billot, as methodically and almost as silently as an automaton, laid another plate on the

table, with a napkin and a platter. Then she drew up a chair.

"Gracious, if you insist upon it—!" said Father Clouïs.

So he placed the gun in one corner, laid the hare on the edge of the buffet, and came to the table, where he found himself seated face to face with Catherine, who looked at him with terror.

The old guard's placid face seemed so little calculated to inspire such a feeling, that Pitou could not account for the emotions betrayed, not only by Catherine's face, but also in a nervous tremor, which agitated her whole form.

Meanwhile Billot filled the plate and glass of his guest, who attacked both, as bravely as if he had not declared himself free from hunger.

"Very pretty wine, Monsieur Billot," he said, as if he wished to render proper respect to the facts, "and a very enjoyable lamb. It appears that you have the same opinion as the proverb, about eating the lambs when they 're too young, and drinking the wines when they 're too old."

As nobody responded to this pleasantry, and the conversation flagged, Clouïs felt it his duty, as a guest, to sustain it; so he continued: "Just now I reminded myself as how this was hare-day; and as I can kill my hare on one side of the forest, as well as the other, I thought I would go into Father Lajeunesse's ward, where I might, at the same time, try how a silver-mounted gun would carry a ball; for I had cast thirteen balls instead of twelve. Faith, it carried that ball very well,—your gun."

"Yes, I know it," said Billot. "It 's a good weapon."

"Hold on!" said Pitou. "Twelve balls? Is there to be a shooting-match somewhere about?"

"No," said Billot.

"Ah, I know that gun very well," continued Pitou. "They call it hereabouts, the *silver-mounted customer*. I saw it do its work two years ago, at the Boursonnes festival. Hold on! That 's where it won the silver dish from which you 're eating, Madame Billot, — yes, and the mug from which you 're drinking, Mademoiselle Catherine. — Oh my!" cried Pitou, scared, "what is the matter with you, Mademoiselle?"

"Me? Nothing," said Catherine, reopening her half-closed eyes, and sitting upright in her chair, against the back whereof she had been leaning, as if about to faint.

"Catherine? Why should anything be the matter with her?" said Billot, shrugging his shoulders.

"Exactly," continued old Clouïs. "Well, I must tell you, — among the old iron at Montagnon's, — the gunsmith's, you know, — I found a mould; and what 's more remarkable, it was just such a mould as you needed. Those devilish little barrels, made by Leclerc, nearly always take a calibre of twenty-four, — which don't prevent them from carrying well, however, — though God knows how they do it; but here I found a mould of just your size, — a trifle smaller, perhaps; but that 's nothing, if you only cover your balls well with grease. Do you wish to shoot something in motion or standing still?"

"I don't know yet," answered Billot. "All I can say is, that it will be used on the watch."

"Ah yes, I see," said Clouïs. "The Duke's boars are very fond of your roots, and you recall the old proverb, that when once the pork 's in pickle, it never 'll eat any more."

There was general silence, broken only by the labored breathing of the girl. Pitou's eyes went from the old

gamekeeper to Billot, and from Billot to the daughter. He tried to see through the mystery, but could form no reasonable conclusion.

As to Mother Billot, it was useless to seek any light in her face. She could not understand what people were saying, not to mention what they were merely thinking about.

"Well," said Clouïs, continuing his own line of thought, "if them balls are for the boars, — well, they 're a *leetle* small, as one might say; because the hide of those gentlemen is very tough, not counting how much they can carry away. I've known boars who had five, six, or eight balls between the hide and the flesh, — regular balls, too, sixteen to the pound; and they were none the worse for it."

"These are not for boars," said Billot.

Pitou's curiosity was irresistible. "Pardon me, Monsieur Billot, — if not for prize-shooting, and not for boars, for what then *do* you want these bullets?"

"A wolf!" said Billot.

"Oh, well, if it 's a wolf, here 's just your pattern," said Father Clouïs, taking a dozen balls from his pocket, and clinking them upon an empty plate, as he counted them out. "As to the thirteenth, that 's in the hare's stomach. — Ah, I don't know how your gun would carry small shot, but it carries a bullet to a charm."

If Pitou had glanced at Catherine he would have seen that she was again nearly fainting. While Clouïs was talking, the lad did not once look at the girl; but when he heard the old gamekeeper say that the thirteenth ball was in the hare's stomach, he could not resist the temptation to lift the carcass and verify the statement.

"Sure enough," he said, thrusting his little finger into the bullet-hole, "you did it, Father Clouïs. Monsieur

Billot, *you* shoot well, but you can't kill hares with a free ball, like that."

"No matter!" said Billot. "As the animal I want to shoot is twenty times as big as a hare, I hope I sha'n't miss him."

"The fact is," said Pitou, "that a wolf— But talking of wolves, — are there any in the district? That 's surprising, before the snow flies."

"It *is* surprising; but it is true, notwithstanding."

"You are sure, Monsieur Billot?"

"Very sure!" replied the farmer, looking both at Pitou and Catherine, which was very easy to do, as they sat so near each other. "The shepherd saw one this morning."

"Where?" asked Pitou, innocently.

"On the road from Paris to Boursonnes, near the Ivors Copse."

"Ah!" said Pitou, in his turn looking at the farmer and his daughter.

"Yes," continued Billot, tranquilly. "One was observed last season, and I was duly notified. After a while it was supposed he had gone away, never to return; but —"

"But —?" asked Pitou.

"Well, it seems he *has* returned," said Billot, "and may take a turn about my farm. That 's why I told Father Clouïs to clean up my gun, and run me some balls."

This was as much as Catherine could bear. She rose, uttered a stifled cry, and went tottering towards the door.

Half-bewildered and half-anxious, Pitou also arose, and, seeing Catherine reel, he ran to her support.

Billot cast an awful look towards the door; but Pitou's

honest face manifested so much surprise, as to put to flight any suspicion the farmer might entertain, of the young fellow's complicity with Catherine.

Without showing any further anxiety about either Pitou or his daughter, the farmer went on: "As you say, Father Clouïs, to make the blow sure, it will be well to cover the balls thick with grease."

Pitou heard this question; but he did not hear the answer; because, at that moment, he had rejoined Catherine in the kitchen, and felt the girl sinking into his arms.

"What is it? My God, what is it?" he anxiously asked.

"Oh!" said she, "can't you understand? He knows that Isidore arrived in Boursonnes this morning; and he will kill him, if he comes near the farm."

At that moment the door of the dining-room flew open, and Billot appeared in the doorway.

"My dear Pitou," he said, in a severe tone which admitted no reply, "if thou hast really come for the Lajeunesse rabbits, I fancy it is time for thee to attend to thy snares. Later, thou 'lt not be able to see."

"Yes, Monsieur Billot," said Pitou humbly, looking at both father and daughter, "I came for that, and for nothing else, I swear."

"Well, then —?"

"Well, then, I 'm going!"

He went out by the door leading into the courtyard, while Catherine retired weeping to her chamber, bolting the door behind her.

"Yes," muttered Billot, "yes, — lock yourself in, wretched girl. No matter! It is not on *this* side I shall lay my ambush."

CHAPTER LVIII.

A GAME OF TAG.

All dumfounded Pitou left the farmhouse. To be sure Catherine's last words let in the sunlight, upon what had been obscure up to that moment; but this sunlight blinded him.

Pitou now knew all he wanted to know, and more. He knew that Isidore de Charny had arrived the day before at Boursonnes, and that, if Isidore ventured to visit Catherine at the farm, he would run the risk of a gunshot.

Of this Pitou could no longer harbor a doubt. Billot's parabolic innuendos had been illumined by Catherine's few words. The wolf which had been seen last season, prowling about the farmer's sheepfold, — which had gone away for good, as was believed, but had been seen again that morning, near Ivors Copse, on the way from Paris to Boursonnes, — was the young Viscount.

For his benefit the gun had been cleaned; for him the bullets had been cast. The situation was very grave.

When there was occasion for it, Pitou had the force of a lion, and almost always the prudence of the serpent.

Ever since he attained the age of reason, he had been able, under the very noses of the country constables, to despoil the close-hedged orchards, or the fruit-laden trees in the open fields; and under the very claws of the wood-rangers, he had spread his snares and lime-twigs.

Thus had he gained a habit of practical thought, combined with rapid decision, which stood him in good stead

in the most perilous cases, and enabled him to get the best results from the most untoward circumstances. This time, calling to his aid his customary rapidity, he decided forthwith to gain the edge of the wood, which was only eighty paces from the farmhouse.

This wood was a covert, and under such a covert one could remain unseen, and meditate at his ease.

As may be seen, Pitou reversed the usual order of things, by putting the rapid action first, and leaving thought to come afterwards; for, with all his instinctive intelligence, Pitou was now hard pressed, and his most pressing need was, to find an immediate refuge.

He walked towards the forest with a careless air, as if he were not the bearer of a world of cogitation, and reached his retreat without looking behind him; although once, when he calculated that he was out of sight of the farmhouse, he stooped over, ostensibly to buckle his shoe, but really to take the opportunity of looking backward, between his long legs, and thus studying the outlook.

The outlook was clear, and no sign of danger presented itself. Seeing this, Pitou resumed his straight line, and with a bound was in the woods.

The forest was Pitou's domain. There he was at home; there he was free; there he was king.

He was king, — like the squirrel, whose agility he shared, like the fox, whose cunning he possessed, like the wolf, for Pitou also had eyes which could see in the night; but at this hour he needed neither the agility of the squirrel, the cunning of the fox, nor the night-seeing eyes of the wolf.

It seemed to Pitou a very simple matter, to cut diagonally across that part of the woods in which he was now concealed, and come out by another part of the border

of the forest, which extended along the whole length of the farm.

From a distance of sixty or seventy paces Pitou could see whatever took place. At sixty or seventy paces, Pitou could challenge anybody whatsoever, who was obliged to depend upon his hands and feet, whether for motion or attack.

Of course he could easily outrun a horseman, for there was not one who could make his way a hundred rods in the forest, by the tracks through which Pitou scrambled; therefore Pitou could not find any comparisons disdainful enough to express his contempt for a horseman — in the woods.

Pitou stretched himself along near a cluster of trees, placed his neck between two twin branches, where their stems separated, and then cogitated.

He wondered if it was in his power, much as he wished to do so, to prevent Father Billot from putting into execution the terrible vengeance which he meditated.

The first method of prevention which occurred to Pitou's mind, was to run to Boursonnes, and warn Monsieur Isidore of the danger which awaited him, if he ventured near the farm.

At the same time Pitou bethought himself of two things: first, that Catherine had not commissioned him to do so; second, that there was danger of not being able to forewarn Monsieur Isidore.

What certainty was there that the Viscount, who doubtless meant to conceal himself, would ride over a road frequented by vehicles, and not come by one of those pathways, whereof the woodcutters and foresters availed themselves, to shorten the journey through the woods?

Besides, in going after Isidore, Pitou would have to

abandon Catherine; and, taking all things together, although Pitou would be sorry if any misfortune happened to the Viscount, he would be in despair if any ill befell Catherine.

It appeared wisest to remain where he was, and to take counsel of circumstances, whatever might happen.

Meantime he waited, and watched the farmhouse, his eyes as glaring and steadfast as those of a wildcat, crouching for its prey.

The first observable movement was the departure of Father Clouïs.

Pitou saw him take leave of Billot, under the porch, after which the old man hobbled along by the wall, and disappeared in the direction of Villers Cotterets, — which he must either go through or around, in order to return to his hut, which was a league and a half distant from Pisseleu.

When Clouïs went away, twilight was coming on.

As Father Clouïs was a very secondary personage in the drama which was taking place, — a sort of supernumerary, — Pitou gave him but a fragment of attention; and having satisfied conscience by following the old man till he disappeared behind an angle of the wall, Pitou again fixed his eyes on the centre of the farmhouse, — that is, the porch and the windows.

In an instant one of these windows was lighted, — the one in Billot's chamber.

From Pitou's coign of vantage he could look straight into this chamber. Pitou could see Billot enter the room, and load his gun, with all the precautions recommended by Father Clouïs.

Meanwhile, night began to fall.

His gun being loaded, Billot extinguished his light, and closed both shutters of his window, but in such a way as

to leave a slight opening, doubtless to enable the owner to observe what was going on thereabouts.

From Billot's window, situated a short flight of stairs up from the kitchen, as we have perhaps already said, it was impossible, on account of an elbow formed by the outline of the house, to see Catherine's window, which was situated on the lower floor; but Billot's window commanded a view of the entire road from Boursonnes, and the circle of the forest, from the hill of Ferté Milon to Ivors Copse.

Although Billot could not see Catherine's window, yet if she should go out by the window, and try to reach the woods, he would be able to see her the moment she entered the radius included in his survey; only, as night was deepening, if Billot should see a woman, and suspect that woman to be Catherine, he could not identify her for a certainty.

We advance these remarks, because they were those which Pitou made to himself.

He did not doubt that Catherine would attempt a sortie, so as to warn Isidore, as soon as the darkness fully set in.

Without losing sight of her father's window, it was on Catherine's casement that Pitou's eyes were specially fixed.

Pitou was not mistaken. When the evening had reached a degree of obscurity which seemed to the girl sufficient for her purpose, Pitou — for whom, as we have said, there was no obscurity — saw half of her window slowly turning on its hinges. Presently she climbed over the sill, closed the window after her, and glided alongside the wall.

There was no danger of the girl's being seen, as long as she followed the line of the buildings and the fences,

and if she meant to go to Villers Cotterets, she might get away unperceived; but if, on the contrary, her business took her in the direction of Boursonnes, she could not fail to come within the radius included in the view from her father's window.

At the end of the wall she hesitated a few seconds; so, for an instant, Pitou cherished the hope that she might be bound for Villers Cotterets, and not for Boursonnes; but suddenly her hesitation ceased. Bending over, so as to conceal herself as far as possible from all prying eyes, she crossed the roadway, and entered a narrow footpath, which would lead around, by a cut in the forest, to the Boursonnes highway, about a quarter-league farther on, at the crossways known as Bourg-Fontaine.

Once in this pathway, the course she intended taking was so clear in Pitou's mind, that he paid her no further attention, but watched the half-open shutters of Billot's window, through which, as through the loopholes of a citadel, Billot could see from one extremity of the forest to the other.

Apart from a shepherd, who was taking care of his flock, the whole field, included in Billot's vision, was solitary.

When she entered this field therefore, although her black mantle rendered her almost invisible, she could not escape the farmer's eye.

Pitou saw the window-leaves partially turn. Billot's head was thrust through the opening; and for an instant he remained still, as if, amidst the darkness, he doubted the testimony of his eyes; but as the sheep-dogs, having run towards the flitting shadow, returned to their keeper after a few yelps, Billot no longer doubted that the shadow was Catherine's self. The dogs had recognized her, and therefore instantly ceased barking.

All this translated itself to Pitou, as clearly as if he had been notified in advance of the various incidents of the drama. He waited, therefore, to see Billot shut his chamber window, and open the outside door.

Indeed, after a few seconds, the door did open, just as Catherine reached the edge of the wood; and Billot, with his gun on his shoulder, crossed the threshold of the big vestibule, and marched with long strides towards the forest, following the Boursonnes road, towards the point where it must meet, an eighth of a league away, the path followed by Catherine.

There was not an instant to lose, for in ten minutes the girl would be face to face with her father.

All this Pitou well understood. He sprang up, bounded through the forest like a startled deer, cutting across the woods diagonally, reversing his former course, and reached the edge of the pathway, just as the hurried steps and hasty breathing of the girl were drawing near.

Pitou stopped, and hid behind the trunk of an old oak. In ten seconds Catherine passed within two steps of the tree.

Then Pitou came forth, barring the girl's way, and at the same time calling her by name. This triple unity of action he judged best, in order not to frighten Catherine the more.

As it was, she uttered a feeble cry, and paused, trembling, — less with present than with past emotion, however, — as she said: "You, Monsieur Pitou, here! What do you want with me?"

"In the name of Heaven, not a step further, Mademoiselle," said he, clasping his hands.

"And why not?"

"Because your father knows you are out! Because he has taken the road to Boursonnes, with his gun!

Because he's waiting for you at the Bourg-Fontaine Crossroads."

"But *he*, HE!" cried Catherine, almost overcome. "Must *he* not be warned?" and she made a movement, as if to continue her journey.

"Your attempt will do *him* no good, so long as your father bars your progress."

"What is to be done?"

"Return, Mademoiselle, return at once to your chamber. I will put myself into ambuscade near your window, and when I see Monsieur Isidore, I will warn him."

"You will do this, dear Monsieur Pitou?"

"For you I would do anything, Mademoiselle Catherine! Ah, how much I love you!"

Catherine pressed his hands, and said, after a brief consideration: "Yes, you are right! Take me home."

As her legs began to fail her, she put her arm under Pitou's, who sustained her, half walking, half running, all the way back to the farm.

In ten minutes more she re-entered her own room, without having been seen; and she closed the window behind her, as Pitou pointed out the group of willows, in which he intended to watch and wait.

CHAPTER LIX.

THE WATCH FOR THE WOLF.

The willows, twenty or twenty-five paces from Catherine's window, were on a slight elevation, overlooking a ditch through which ran a small stream of water, seven or eight feet below the top of the ground.

This stream, which followed the winding of the roadway, was shaded here and there by other willows, similar to those forming the group whereof we speak, — that is, trees which resembled dwarfs, especially in the night, — dwarfs with small bodies, and big heads of spiky and tangled hair.

It was in the last of these trees, hollowed by time, that Pitou had deposited Catherine's letters, morning after morning; and thither Catherine had gone after them, when she saw her father leave the house, and disappear in the opposite direction.

Pitou had taken so much precaution on his side, and Catherine on hers, that it was not from this quarter the blaze had been fanned. It had been started by an untoward accident, which that morning placed the head shepherd in Isidore's way. Without attaching to it any special importance, the shepherd mentioned, to the farmer, the news that the Viscount had returned. This unannounced return, at five o'clock in the morning, appeared more than suspicious to Billot. Ever since his own return from Paris, and Catherine's illness, — especially since Doctor Raynal advised him not to enter her sick-chamber

during her delirium, — Billot had been convinced that young Charny was his daughter's lover ; and as the farmer could see only disgrace as the result of this entanglement, — for Isidore could hardly marry Catherine, — the farmer had resolved to wipe away this dishonor, by bringing it to a bloody termination.

All the details we have recounted, though insignificant to one not informed as to the underlying causes, had a terrible significance in Catherine's eyes, — and in Pitou's also, after Catherine gave him the clew.

Divining her father's intention, Catherine's sole opposing attempt was to warn Isidore, — an undertaking which Pitou luckily checkmated ; for otherwise, she would have encountered her father on the road, in place of Isidore.

She knew the farmer's fierce character too well, to expect anything from him by prayers and supplications. They would only hasten the storm, and provoke the catastrophe, instead of turning it away. To prevent a collision between her sweetheart and her father, was her sole ambition.

She had believed herself dying, because of Isidore's absence ; but now she ardently wished his absence had been prolonged. How she could bless the voice which said to her, "He is gone," even though it added, "gone forever."

Pitou understood this just as well as Catherine, and that was why he offered to act as a go-between for the girl. Whether the Viscount came afoot or on horseback, Pitou expected to hear him or see him, in season to get in front of him, and speak two words, which would inform him as to the turn of affairs, and so persuade him to get away from that neighborhood, with the understanding that Pitou would bring him intelligence of Catherine the next day.

Pitou stuck to his willow, as if he were a part of the vegetable family in whose midst he found himself, and devoted all his senses — which were so accustomed to the darkness, the fields, and the woods — to seeing if he could detect a shadow or hear a sound.

Suddenly it seemed as if he could hear behind him, coming from the direction of the forest, the noise of an irregular step, like that of a man stumbling over the furrows. As this step was too heavy to belong to the young and elegant Viscount, Pitou turned slowly and quietly around in his willow, and perceived the farmer only thirty paces off, with his gun on his shoulder.

As Pitou at once surmised, Billot had waited awhile at the Borough Spring; but seeing nobody emerge from the footpath which he supposed Catherine had taken, he believed himself in error, and decided that he would go back, and put himself in ambush opposite Catherine's window, feeling sure that it was through this window the Viscount would try to visit his *inamorata*.

By an unlucky chance, what should Billot do, but choose for his ambush the very cluster of willows where Pitou was trying to hide.

Guessing the farmer's intention, and having no disposition to contend for the place, Pitou let himself roll gently down the declivity, till he disappeared in the ditch, where his head was concealed among the projecting roots of the very willow against which Billot presently leaned.

Happily the wind blew with some violence, or Billot would have heard the throbbing of Pitou's heart; but it must be said, to the honor of our hero's admirable nature, that the sense of personal danger troubled him far less than anxiety lest he should break his word to Catherine.

If Monsieur de Charny should come, and some misfortune should befall her lover, would Catherine think, that perhaps Pitou had betrayed them?

Pitou would prefer to die, rather than have Catherine so misjudge him; yet there was nothing to be done but to remain where he was, and keep perfectly still, as the least movement would betray Pitou as a second watcher.

A quarter-hour passed without anything breaking the silence of the night. Pitou cherished a last hope, — that if by some accident the Viscount should be late, Billot would get tired of waiting, would doubt if Charny was coming at all, and go into the house.

Pitou's position was such, that his ear came naturally against the earth, and suddenly he thought he heard a horse's gallop. This horse, if it was a horse, must be coming by way of the footpath leading from the woods.

Very soon there was no room for doubt that it was a horse, for he crossed the road, hardly sixty paces from the willows, and they heard his tread on the broken stones, one of which gave forth sparks of fire, when smitten by the animal's shoe.

Above his head Pitou could see the farmer bending over, and trying to see into the obscurity; but the night was so dark that Pitou's own eyes, accustomed as he was to seeing in the gloom, could only discern a sort of spectre, which bounded across the roadway, and disappeared along the walls of the enclosure.

Pitou did not doubt for an instant that the spectre was Isidore, but he hoped the Viscount had some other access to the farmhouse besides the window. Billot feared the same thing, and muttered something like blasphemy.

Then there were ten minutes of painful silence. At the end of these ten minutes, thanks to his acute vision, Pitou distinguished a human form at the extremity of the wall.

The rider had tied his horse to some tree beyond, and was now returning on foot.

The night was so dark that Pitou hoped Billot might not see this sort of a spectre, or see it too late.

He was mistaken. Billot saw; and twice Pitou heard, above his own head, the click made by the farmer, in setting the triggers of his gun.

The man who was gliding along by the walls heard the same noise, to which the ear of a sportsman is seldom deaf, for he stopped, and tried to pierce the obscurity with his gaze; but it was impossible for him to see anything definite.

During this halt of a second, Pitou cast his eyes upward, and saw the gun-barrel raised above the ditch; but the farmer was either doubtful of his aim at that distance, or feared making some mistake, for the barrel, so rapidly raised, was as slowly lowered again.

The shadow once more began to move onward, stealing along against the wall. Evidently it was approaching Catherine's window.

This time it was the farmer's heart-beats which might be heard by Pitou, who was asking himself what he could do, — by what outcry he could warn the unfortunate young man, by what means he could save him. Nothing occurred to his mind, and he despairingly buried his hands in his hair.

Again Pitou saw the gun-barrel rise, but a second time it was lowered. The victim was too far away.

A half-minute hardly elapsed before the young lover crossed the remaining twenty steps, which still separated him from the window, on which he thrice rapped softly, at equal intervals.

There was no longer a shadow of doubt. The intruder was a lover, and he came after Catherine.

A third time the gun-barrel was raised, just as Catherine, recognizing the customary signal, half opened her casement.

Pitou panted, as he almost felt the spring of the trigger overhead. The noise of the flint made itself heard, as it struck the steel, a lightning gleam flashed across the road; but no explosion followed the glare, for the priming alone had been burned. It was a flash in the pan.

The young gentleman now saw the danger into which he had run, and made a movement to rush towards the fire; but Catherine grasped his arm, and drew him towards herself, saying, in a low voice: "It 's my father! He knows all! Come!"

With force almost superhuman she aided him to clamber up and through the window, closing the flap behind him.

There remained a second shot in the farmer's gun, but the two young people were so entwined at that moment, that if he fired on Isidore, he feared he should kill the girl; so he muttered to himself: "He will have to go away; and when he goes, I won't miss him the second time!"

Meanwhile, with the priming wire from his cartridge-box, he cleaned out the vent-hole of his gun, and filled it with fresh powder, in order not to renew the miracle of failure, to which Isidore owed his life.

During the next five minutes no noise was heard. Even Pitou's breathing was nearly suspended, as well as the farmer's, and the throbbing of their hearts was inaudible.

Suddenly, amidst the silence, was heard the barking of the dogs, confined in the courtyard on the farther side.

Billot stamped his foot, listened an instant, and then

stamped again, saying: "Ah, she is sending him away through the orchard, and the dogs are barking at him."

Bounding across the ditch, over Pitou's invisible head, the farmer slipped on the other side; but in spite of the darkness, thanks to his acquaintance with the locality, he disappeared around the angle of the wall, quick as lightning, hoping to reach the other side of the farm enclosure as soon as Isidore.

Pitou saw through this manœuvre. With the alertness of a man of his nature, he clambered out of the ditch, went straight across the road to Catherine's window, pulled open the outside shutter, which was unfastened, pushed open the casement, climbed into the empty room, passed through into the lamp-lighted kitchen, entered the courtyard, and ran along the alley-way leading into orchard, where — thanks to his power of seeing in the the darkness, like an owl — he could discern two shadows, one bestriding the high wall, the other at its foot, standing upright, with extended arms.

Before throwing himself down on the other side of the wall, her lover turned to Catherine for the last time, saying: "We shall meet again! Do not forget, thou art mine!"

"Yes, yes, yes!" said the girl, "but go, go!"

"Yes, — go, go, Monsieur Isidore!" cried Pitou.

They could hear the noise made by the young nobleman, as he struck the earth on the other side of the wall, and then they heard the neigh of recognition from his horse. Presently they heard also the animal's rapid gallop, then one gunshot, and then another.

At the first shot Catherine uttered a cry, and made a motion as if she would rush to Isidore's assistance. At the second she groaned, and fell nerveless upon Pitou's arm.

He listened, with extended neck, to see if the horse continued his course with the same rapidity as before the shots were fired. Hearing the uninterrupted gallop of the animal, as it receded farther and farther away, Pitou said sententiously: "Good! There 's some hope. One can't see by night as well as by day, and the hand is not so sure when it draws on a man, as when it draws on a wolf or a boar."

Lifting Catherine, he intended carrying her in his arms; but by a powerful effort of will she rallied all her strength, slid to the ground, and asked Pitou, holding him by the arm: "Where art thou taking me?"

"Why, to your chamber, Mademoiselle," said the astonished Pitou.

"Pitou," she demanded, "is there any place where I can hide?"

"Oh yes, Mademoiselle; or if not, I can find one," said Pitou.

"Then take me there!"

"But the farmhouse —?"

"In five minutes I hope to leave it, never to return."

"But your father —?"

"All is broken between me and the man who wishes to kill my lover."

"But, nevertheless, Mademoiselle, —" Pitou ventured to say.

"Thou refusest to accompany me, Pitou?" asked the girl, abandoning his arm.

"No, Mademoiselle Catherine, God forbid!"

"Then follow me!"

Walking ahead, Catherine went through the orchard, into the kitchen-garden. At the other end of the kitchen-garden was a small door, opening towards the Noue Fields.

Catherine opened it without hesitation, took out the key, shut the door, double locked it behind her, and threw the key into a cistern near the wall.

With a firm step she walked over the uneven earth, leaning on Pitou's arm, and the two soon vanished into the valley, extending from the village of Pisseleu to the Noue Fields.

Nobody saw them go; and God alone knew where Catherine found the refuge which Pitou had promised her.

CHAPTER LX.

AFTER THE STORM.

It is with human storms as with meteorological hurricanes. The sky is shrouded, the lightning flashes, the thunder rumbles, the earth seems quivering on its axis. There is a moment of paroxysm, when we may well believe men and things to be alike on the verge of annihilation, when we tremble, moan, and lift our hands to our Lord, as the One good and merciful.

Little by little calmness supervenes. Night flees and day reappears. The sun revives. The flowers reopen their petals. The trees straighten themselves. Men return to their business, their pleasures, their passions. Life laughs and sings, along the highways and in the doorways, and nobody worries about the partial desert left in the track of the storm, or where the lightning had fallen.

Thus it was at the farm. All night long there was a terrible tempest in the heart of that man, resolved upon a vengeful project, which he had partially carried out.

When he discovered his daughter's flight, when he searched vainly in the darkness for some trace of her footsteps, when he called her name, — first in anger, then in supplication, and finally in despair, and no response came to these passionate moods, — he was smitten in some vital part of his powerful organization; but at last, when the silence of exhaustion succeeded the lightning and thunder, as after an atmospheric storm; when the dogs,

having nothing more to disturb them, ceased their barking; when rain, mixed with hail, effaced the traces of blood, which, like a half-loosed belt, encircled one side of the farm; when the village clock, that mute witness of whatever had taken place, sounded out on the air, with its vibratory wings of bronze, the last hours of the night, — then, at last, things resumed their usual course at Pisseleu.

The big courtyard door creaked on its rusty hinges. The laborers again went forth, some to sow seed, some to ply the harrow, others to harness the wagons. Then Billot appeared in his turn, crossing the field, with all his senses level.

Finally, when it was full day, the rest of the village awoke, and some, who had not slept so soundly as the others, said, with an air half inquisitive and half careless: "Father Billot's dogs howled tremendously last night, and two gunshots were heard in the neighborhood of the farmhouse."

This was all! Ah, so we deceive ourselves.

When Father Billot returned to the house at nine o'clock, for his breakfast, as was his custom, his wife asked: "Say, my goodman, where 's Catherine? Dost know?"

"Catherine?" answered the farmer, with an effort. "The air of the farm does n't agree with her, and she has started for Sologne, to visit her aunt."

"Ah!" said Mother Billot, "will she stay long at her aunt's?"

"As long as she 's no better," replied the farmer.

Mother Billot sighed, and pushed away her cup of coffee and milk.

On his side the farmer made an effort to eat; but at the third mouthful his food choked him. He lifted a

bottle of burgundy by the neck, emptied it at a draught, and then said, with a hoarse voice: "They have n't unsaddled my horse, I hope?"

"No, Monsieur Billot," replied the timid voice of a child, who every morning came to the farm after some breakfast.

"Good!" said the farmer, as he brusquely shoved the little fellow aside, mounted his horse, and pushed his way into the fields; while his wife, drying a couple of tears, retreated to her usual corner, under the huge chimney-piece.

Minus the singing bird, minus the smiling flower, — which the young girl resembled, in those traits which cheered and perfumed the old walls, — the farm took up its wonted course, and went on the next day as it had gone on the day before.

As for Pitou, he saw the daybreak from his own home in Haramont; and those who were there at six o'clock found his place lighted by a candle, which had apparently been burning a long time, if one could judge by the slanting wick, which needed snuffing; for Pitou was preparing to send to Gilbert, with all the receipts, an account of the use he had made of the twenty-five louis which the Doctor had donated for the clothing and equipment of the Haramont National Guards.

It is true that a woodcutter declared he had seen Pitou about midnight, going down the steep declivity leading to the hermitage of Father Clouïs, and carrying on his arm something heavy, which looked like a woman; but this report was hardly credible, inasmuch as Father Lajeunesse pretended to have seen Pitou running, with all his legs, along the road to Boursonnes, at one o'clock in the morning; whereas Maniquet, who lived at the extremity of the town, on the Longpré side, asserted

that at two, or half-past, he saw Pitou pass by his door, and called out, "Good-evening, Pitou!" a courtesy to which Pitou had responded by saying: "Good-evening, Maniquet."

There was therefore no reason whatever for doubting that Maniquet saw Pitou at two o'clock, or thereabouts; but whether the woodcutter did or did not see Pitou at midnight, in the neighborhood of Clouïse Rock, carrying a heavy object resembling a woman; whether Father Lajeunesse did or did not see Pitou running, with all his legs, at about one o'clock, along the Boursonnes road; whether Maniquet did or did not say Good-evening to Pitou, who was passing by Maniquet's house about two or half-past, — this is certain: that if Pitou, — of whom we lost sight, along with Catherine, about half-past ten or eleven in the evening, in the valley which divides Pisseleu from the Noue Fields, — if Pitou did go from there to Clouïse Rock, a league and a half; if he went from Clouïse Rock to Boursonnes, two leagues farther; if from Boursonnes he returned to Clouïse Rock; if, finally, he returned from Clouïse Rock to his own home, — if Pitou did these things, we say, it may be well conjectured that first, he put Catherine into a place of safety; then, went to Boursonnes after news of the Viscount; next, returned to Catherine, with intelligence concerning the Viscount; and that he covered all this ground, eight or nine leagues, between eleven o'clock in the evening and two or two and a half in the morning, — a supposition hardly admissible, even for one of those royal couriers, who, as some people assert, could formerly break all present records; but this effort need not astonish those who have heretofore learned to appreciate Pitou's locomotive faculties.

Nevertheless, as Pitou revealed to nobody the secrets

of that night, when he was apparently endowed with the gift of ubiquity, the result was, — with the exception of Désiré Maniquet, to whose Good-evening he had responded, — that nobody, not even Father Lajeunesse or the woodcutter, dared affirm on oath, that it was indeed Pitou, who was seen in these other places, — at the declivity of Clouïse Rock or on the Boursonnes Road, — and not a spectre or phantom, taking on some resemblance to Pitou.

At about six o'clock the next morning, as Billot was mounting his horse to ride afield, Pitou was seen, without any appearance of fatigue or excitement, making up Tailor Dulauroy's accounts, to which he added, as vouchers, the receipts of each of the thirty-three soldiers.

There is one other person of our acquaintance who slept badly that night. This was Doctor Raynal.

At one o'clock he was roused by the Viscount's lackey, who rang the bell as if he would pull it off.

The Doctor, as was his custom when the night-bell sounded, opened the door himself. The Viscount's lackey had come for him, because of a serious accident to his master; and he led a second horse, ready saddled, so that Doctor Raynal need not be delayed a single instant.

The Doctor dressed himself in a turn of his hand, straddled the horse, and started at a gallop, preceded by the lackey, as if he were a courier.

What was the accident? He would be informed at the château; only he had better bring his case of surgical instruments.

The accident proved to be a wound in the left side and a scratch on the right shoulder, made by two balls, which appeared to be of the same calibre, that is, twenty-four; but as to the details of the occurrence, the Viscount would say nothing.

One of the two wounds, the one in the side, was serious, but not dangerous, as the ball passed through the flesh, without touching any important organ.

As to the other wound, it was not worth talking about.

When the injuries were dressed, the young man gave the Doctor twenty-five louis to maintain silence.

"If you wish me to keep silence, you must pay me only my ordinary fee, that is, one pistole, or ten francs," responded the brave physician; and taking only one louis (twenty-four francs) from the pile, he gave fourteen francs in change to the Viscount, who in vain urged him to accept more.

This the Doctor would not do; but he announced that he thought three visits would be necessary, and that he would therefore return the next day, on the day after that, and again on the day following.

At the second visit the Doctor found his patient up. By the aid of a band, which held the plaster in its place against the wound, Isidore was able the next day to mount his horse, as if nothing had happened to him; so that nobody in the household knew anything of his accident, except his confidential servant.

At the third visit Doctor Raynal found his patient had gone out; and therefore he would only accept a half-pistole, or five francs, for his visit.

The Doctor was one of those rare physicians who are worthy to have in their offices a certain famous engraving, which represents Hippocrates refusing the gifts of Artaxerxes.

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